

ENGLISH SOCIALISM OF TO-DAY

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A. M. E.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE CITIZEN READER

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THE LAWS OF EVERY-DAY LIFE

67th Thousand

A HISTORY OF ENGLAND

33rd Thousand

THINGS NEW AND OLD

276th Thousand

THIS WORLD OF OURS

20th Thousand

THE COMING OF THE KILOGRAM

10th Thousand

OUR GREAT CITY

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IN A CONNING TOWER

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ENGLISH SOCIALISM OF TO-DAY

ITS TEACHING AND ITS AIMS EXAMINED

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER, M.P.

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PREFACE

THE contents of this book originally appeared in the form of articles contributed to the 'Standard.' They have been reproduced practically without alteration, as no criticism has appeared during the course of publication which has necessitated any correction as to matters of fact, or any modification of the conclusions arrived at.

There have, however, been some criticisms which are deserving of attention, not because of their weight or cogency, but because they supply a useful confirmation of the statements made by the author, and because they furnish convincing proof of the strength of the case he has sought to establish.

The criticisms may be conveniently divided into two classes, the elusive and the abusive. The elusive criticism is that which seeks to discredit the case against Socialism by pretending that it is based upon incorrect or unauthorised documents. It is indeed a favourite device of Socialist controversialists to repudiate any utterance or any

written document which does not happen to suit the audience which for the time being they desire to conciliate. This practice is rendered easy because within the limits of Socialist literature diametrically opposite views on almost every subject discussed are to be found.

Under these circumstances the only safe course for one who desires to express an opinion upon the Socialist policy, and at the same time to be free from the danger of being met with a denial of his authority, is to go straight to the fountain-head, to ask the responsible leaders of the Socialist party what it is they do mean, and to accept their printed official reply as conclusive. This is the course which the author has adopted. The principal official of one of the Socialist organisations has thought fit to upbraid the author for his failure to observe the proper precautions in obtaining information with regard to Socialism, its teaching and its aims. 'If Mr. Arnold-Forster,' says the Secretary of the I.L.P., 'desired to have such Independent Labour Party publications as would place him in possession of the general teachings of the I.L.P. why did he not make application to me as Secretary of the Association?' These words would possibly not have been written had the writer been aware that the course which he recommends is precisely that which was followed.

An application was made, not, it is true, to the I.L.P., but to the Secretary of the 'Social Democratic

Federation,' asking him to be good enough to send any literature which, in his opinion, explained the Socialist position and described the Socialist programme. In reply the Secretary forwarded a long catalogue of books and pamphlets issued or circulated by his association. The list contained works published by the Independent Labour Party and by the Fabian Society, as well as those published by the Social Democratic Federation itself. From the list thus acquired some fifty books and pamphlets were ordered, and it is on the documents so supplied that the author has relied. In every case the authority cited is given in full. It will be seen that in the great majority of cases the quotations are taken from the latest authorised official programmes of the two principal Socialist associations. In all other cases they are taken from publications issued or circulated by those associations.

It might have been thought that under these circumstances the author would have been safe from what has been called the 'elusive' form of criticism, and that his authorities, at any rate, would not have been called in question. Such, however, has not proved to be the case. The most important, and indeed the only serious, criticism has come from Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P., a courteous and competent opponent, whose position as Chairman of the Independent Labour Party gives special weight to his words. Speaking at Dundee on December 6,

1907, Mr. Macdonald declared the present work to be valueless because the author, so far from doing justice to Socialism, had chosen to quote from 'obscure and obscurantist documents which expressed the Socialist need in the very baldest and the very worst form.'

As has already been made evident, this remark fails as a criticism. The documents from which quotations have been made may have the qualities attributed to them; they may be both 'obscure and obscurantist'; but that is not the fault of the present author. If they are not all that could be desired, they are, at any rate, the best to be got; for they are the official programmes and the official publications of the principal Socialist bodies in this country.

Mr. Macdonald's criticism has been referred to here, not for the purpose of continuing a controversy for which there is really no material, but because it serves as a warning to those who are confronted by Socialist denials. The Socialists are appealing by means of books and pamphlets, scattered broadcast throughout the land, to uneducated and unguided men. It is by what these books and pamphlets contain that they ought to be judged; and the fact that moderate and conciliatory language which has no relation whatever to the printed official statements is sometimes used in addressing audiences composed of educated men and women ought not to weigh for one moment in the balance.

Mr. Macdonald in a later criticism has remarked, apparently as a matter of reproach, that he notices that 'Mr. Arnold-Forster very wisely quotes sparingly from the Independent Labour party.' The fact that few quotations have been made from the publications of the I.L.P., and that little or no hostility is displayed towards the party in these pages, is not a question of wisdom or unwisdom. The reason is a very simple one. The I.L.P. has undoubtedly made itself responsible as a body for one or two very unwise and dangerous propositions; several of its members have brought discredit upon it by foolish, uncharitable, or cruel utterances. But it would not be fair to judge any party solely by the worst speeches of its least reputable members; and though there are objectionable features in the official programme of the I.L.P., the programme as a whole is on an infinitely higher plane than that of the S.D.F., and, in the opinion of the author, is, at any rate, more honest than that of the Fabians. Mr. Macdonald may rest assured that if the author has refrained from attacking the I.L.P. as ardently as its President seems to desire, it is simply because he has attacked only those things which seem to him dangerous and evil.

The I.L.P. is an English party, which the S.D.F. is not,¹ and, moreover, it is a party which in the

¹ The S.D.F. is in the habit of describing itself as an *International Organisation*, and merits the title by the assiduity it displays in

nature of things must exist and must play an important part for good or evil in the future of the nation.

Leaving Mr. Macdonald and his rather unfortunate objections, we come to the criticism furnished by the Secretary of the Society of which the Member for Leicester is the President. This criticism, which is of a violent and foolish character, will be found in the Appendix (p. 219). It would not be worth preserving here were it not that, from its official nature, and also from the fact that it is characteristic of Socialist methods of controversy, it possesses a certain importance.

It will be observed by those who refer to the documents in the Appendix that Mr. Johnson's¹ criticism, such as it is, is partly of the elusive and partly of the abusive character. He does not apparently dispute the fact that the passages quoted, and to which his letter refers, are inflammatory, and such as any public man ought to be ashamed of; indeed he is evidently ashamed of them himself. But he contents himself with denying responsibility for the incriminated publication,² and seeks to put the blame upon some of his Socialist comrades. With what success he has done this the reader will be able

disseminating in this country the catchwords and cant phrases of the more violent French and German revolutionaries.

¹ Mr. Frank Johnson, Secretary of the I.L.P.

² *The Class War*.

to judge. But the matter does not quite end here. Mr. Johnson, Secretary of the I.L.P., in his particularly discourteous and unwise letters, is not content with one blunder. It was not wise to give the lie direct to a writer who stated that the pamphlet 'The Class War' emanated from the Publication Department of the I.L.P. It was not wise, when confronted by a copy of the pamphlet bearing the imprint 'I.L.P. Publication Department,' to omit any apology for a patent error, and to suggest that no such pamphlet existed. But it was still less wise on Mr. Johnson's part to commit himself officially to the statement that 'neither the Independent Labour Party nor any other Socialist organisation holds ideas of class hatred and class tyranny.' We have already given sufficient examples in the text of this work to demonstrate the absurdity of such a statement as this. It is not too much to say that the preaching of a class war and the encouragement of class hatred and misunderstanding form the dominant note in current Socialist literature. But if any doubt were possible the following passages, taken respectively from the official programme of the S.D.F. and from a pamphlet circulated by that body, should finally remove it:—

That in order to ensure greater material¹ and moral facilities for the working class to organise itself and to

¹ Programme and rules of the S.D.F.

xii ENGLISH SOCIALISM OF TO-DAY

carry on *the class war*, the following reforms must be immediately carried through.¹

We have enumerated these reforms elsewhere. And again :—

The Social Democratic Federation is a militant Socialist organisation whose members belong mostly to the working class.

THE CLASS WAR

To this end (the furtherance of Socialism and the interests of the working class) the S.D.F. *proclaims and preaches the Class War*.

Indeed, on this question the statement made by Mr. James Leatham, author of the Socialist pamphlet 'The Class War,' seems conclusive, for he tells us : '*The I.L.P. is the only Socialist Party in Europe, probably in the world, which does not accept, but explicitly repudiates, the principle of The Class War.*'²

Of the 'abusive' criticism little need be said. One conscientious critic has declared that the present work is 'dull,' another that it is 'drivel.' But neither of these generalisations can be regarded as being very enlightening upon the main point at issue—namely, whether what has been written be true or not. Moreover, the author has already received testimony from many quarters which lead him to believe that his efforts have been regarded in a more favourable

¹ *The Social Democratic Federation : its Objects, its Principles, and its Work.* S.D.F. Central Office, 1907

² Letter to *Standard* of Dec. 28, 1907.

light than the condemnation of the two censors above quoted would permit him to hope. Whatever else may be said of the case which the author has sought to establish, it will be admitted that it is one which can only be met by argument and reasoning, and that personalities, abusive language, and blank denials of well-known facts can only tend to establish it more firmly. These obvious considerations, however, do not seem as yet to have been appreciated by some of the Socialist organs.

Whatever value this little book may possess is due to the facts which it contains. These facts have not been impugned—they cannot be impugned. They furnish the basis upon which we can judge, upon which indeed we are compelled to judge, of the English Socialism of to-day. It is possible to have many opinions as to the importance and bearing of these facts; but no ingenuity, no violence, will succeed in explaining them away.

H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER.

January 1908.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE REAL BASIS OF THE SOCIALIST CASE

	PAGE
Socialist exaggerations—The Socialist division of Society examined—The soil in which Socialism grows	I

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

The Socialism of the philosophers—Socialism as it is being taught—Municipal Socialism—One word and many meanings	14
--	----

CHAPTER III

SOCIALISM AS IT IS BEING TAUGHT

The 'urgent reforms' of the Socialist programme—The available evidence—The Socialist programme—The State regulation of wages	22
--	----

CHAPTER IV

OUGHT WE TO FIGHT SOCIALISM?

The declaration of war—Why we must fight—Socialism and Christianity—The need for plain speaking—The real danger	39
---	----

CHAPTER V

THE SOCIALIST PROMISES EXAMINED

	PAGE
A pertinent inquiry—'The State' and what it means—'The State' as we know it—State interference—Do the people of England want what the Socialists promise?	53

CHAPTER VI

THE SOCIALIST PROMISES EXAMINED—(*continued*)

Equality of opportunity—Equal division of profits—Socialisation of means of production—The taxation of unearned incomes	62
---	----

CHAPTER VII

THE SOCIALIST PROMISES EXAMINED—(*continued*)

The abolition of the Regular Army—The abandonment of India—The Army of the future	73
---	----

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOCIALIST PROMISES EXAMINED—(*continued*)

The repudiation of the National Debt—The effect of repudiation—The holders of the debt—What the debt is	85
---	----

CHAPTER IX

THE SOCIALIST PROMISES EXAMINED—(*continued*)

The abolition of the Monarchy—The election of judges—The prohibition of child labour—Class rule and the class war	94
---	----

CHAPTER X

SOCIALIST TAXATION

	PAGE
Robbery by Act of Parliament—The criterion of just taxation—A patent fallacy—An example from Barrow-in-Furness . . .	105

CHAPTER XI

SOCIALIST TAXATION—(*continued*)

Class taxation—Punitive taxation—Compensation—Self-destructive taxation	114
---	-----

CHAPTER XII

THE HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF SOCIALISM

An old story retold—Socialism in action—The Socialist succession—The typical qualities of Socialism in action . . .	123
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII

SOCIALISM IN ACTION

The Anabaptist movement—The Socialists of 1793—'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity'—How to deal with the Opposition—The 'Class War'	134
--	-----

CHAPTER XIV

SOCIALISM IN ACTION—(*continued*)

Expropriation and its results—The reign of 'Reason'—The Army under S.D.F. principles—'Right about face! Quick march!'—The Socialist Navy—The tree and its fruit . . .	145
---	-----

xviii ENGLISH SOCIALISM OF TO-DAY

CHAPTER XV

SOCIALISM IN ACTION—(*continued*)

	PAGE
The Paris Commune of 1871—A Socialist victory—The Government of 'The People'—Liberty of the Press—The usages of war—The Revolutionary Tribunal—Murder and arson . . .	153

CHAPTER XVI

THE SOCIALISM OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Subsidiary points of the Socialist programme—General character of the proposals—The price to be paid—Machinery proposals—Old-age pensions—State maintenance of children—Socialism and collective administration—The profits of labour . . .	163
---	-----

CHAPTER XVII

THE SOCIALISM OF EVERYDAY LIFE—(*continued*)

The nationalisation of railways—State servants and their votes—The minimum wage—Municipal dwellings—The public control of the drink traffic—The eight hours' day . . .	176
--	-----

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS

The limits imposed—National ideas and the Empire—Levelling up Emigration—The wages problem and tariff reform . . .	187
--	-----

CHAPTER XIX

SOME CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS—(*continued*)

The land—Land transfer—Security—Communications and power distribution—Afforestation and road-making—The mercantile marine	196
---	-----

CHAPTER XX

SOME CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS—(*continued*)

	PAGE
The amenities of life—Class distinctions—An example from the Army—An example from the magistracy—Conclusion . . .	207
APPENDIX	219
INDEX	227

ENGLISH SOCIALISM OF TO-DAY

CHAPTER I

THE REAL BASIS OF THE SOCIALIST CASE

Socialist exaggerations—The Socialist division of Society examined—
The soil in which Socialism grows

THE question of 'Socialism' is very much in the air. There are, perhaps, some who would say that it is in the air only, and that the party of whose activities we have heard so much of late has no real existence. There is an element of truth in this view. It has been said by a shrewd observer that there are many Socialists in the world, but no Socialism; and in the same way it may be said to be doubtful whether the large number of persons who class themselves, or allow themselves to be classed, as Socialists really form any coherent and effective body in the country. The recent municipal elections¹ tend to strengthen this view, for it is an undoubted fact that the Socialists as an organised

¹ The municipal elections of 1907.

2 ENGLISH SOCIALISM OF TO-DAY

party, so far from having progressed, have lost much ground.

Nevertheless it would be a mistake to regard Socialism as a negligible force, or the Socialist party as one which is likely to fail for want of adherents, and which can therefore be wisely disregarded. It is impossible to study the conditions of which it is the outgrowth without feeling that Socialism may easily become a great power for good or for evil in this country. This is not because the Socialist leaders are very remarkable persons, or because the Socialist creed, so far as it can be ascertained from their teaching, is one which is congenial to the English character. In saying this it must be clearly understood that no attempt is here made to pass judgment upon the merits of that teaching. Some of it is undoubtedly bad ; some of it is good ; much of it is mere Utopianism, which has no particular connection with anything in this world, and which would not be listened to if it were not accompanied by proposals of an exceedingly practical and mundane character. Socialism, as it is now being taught in this country, is important because it is a symptom of a disease. The present writer has been criticised for saying that Socialism is much more the outcome of circumstances than the direct result of Socialist teaching. But the statement will bear examination. To a great extent Socialism is an appeal to the unhappy and the

unfortunate. There are two classes of persons who are specially susceptible to the appeals of the extreme Socialist: those who have never known hope or enjoyment, and those who, having known the enjoyment of life and the vivifying splendour of hope, have been deprived of the power of enjoyment, and have lost the right to hope. It is because there are very many persons in this country who are included in these two sorrowful categories that the teaching even of the most extreme Socialists is received and welcomed.

FACTS, FIGURES, AND FANCIES

If any one desires to know something of the classes who suffer without hope, and of the extent of the suffering which is endured by a vast number of people in these islands, he will find it in many places. Among others, he will find it in some of the Socialist pamphlets, and in one of them, published by the Fabian Society under the title of 'Facts for Socialists,' he will see how the facts are being represented to those to whom the Society addresses itself. Who can deny that in the main these facts are true? They are not all true, and in one respect they are grossly misleading. There is, however, sufficient truth in them to entitle them to the earnest attention, not only of those to whom they are specially addressed, but of every man and woman in England.

4 ENGLISH SOCIALISM OF TO-DAY

It has been said, however, that the facts are misleading in one respect. Such is the case. They have the dangerous quality of a half-truth. They tell part of the story, but they do not tell the whole. It is true, lamentably true, that the distribution of wealth in this country is grossly unequal—so unequal that it cannot be good for the body politic. It is true that there is great poverty, that there is great suffering, and, above all, that there are hundreds of thousands of men and women who live in daily dread lest the turn of a fashion, or some accident against which they can make no provision, may suddenly condemn them to absolute and hopeless penury for the rest of their lives. But it is not true that when these things have been said the whole truth has been told about English society. The majority of the people of this country are not in abject poverty, nor are they without hope. Happiness is not confined to the rich, nor misery to the poor. If many are incapable of making provision against evil days, there are many who can make, and do make, such provision. It is true that the power of capital is sometimes abused, as all power is. But it is not true that all owners of capital in this country are perverse, inhuman, or unsympathetic. Above all, it is absolutely untrue to suggest, as almost every Socialist publication does suggest, that there is a bitter and conscious class war being waged between the two great sections of Englishmen. The sharp line to

demarcation which the Socialists seek to draw between the 'Capitalists' and the 'Proletariat' does not exist. There are infinite gradations with respect to wealth, intelligence, and education throughout English society; and common to every class of society are the great qualities of love of country, sympathy with suffering, a desire to share burdens, zeal for the public service, and an earnest and honest determination to make government equal and just for all. But, when all is said, there is enough truth in the extreme picture of the nation's unhappiness to justify the Socialists in devoting their lives to the teaching of a gospel which will bring relief to those who now sit in darkness. Many of the Socialists doubtless believe that they have such a gospel, and no one, therefore, can blame them for teaching it. But that is no reason why those who are asked to accept the doctrine as true, and to hand over the fortunes of their country to its exponents, should not examine the doctrine for themselves and ascertain whether it is, in fact, a message of healing and peace, or whether it must not necessarily lead to the aggravation of misery and the letting loose of strife. It is to an inquiry of this kind that it is proposed to devote the following chapters.

THE SOCIALIST DIVISION OF SOCIETY

But before proceeding to a detailed examination of the Socialist programme it will be well to clear the ground by dealing with one point the proper comprehension of which is necessary before any of the Socialist proposals can be gauged at their true value. In logic there is an error which is known as *petitio principii*, or, in plain English, 'begging the question.' Throughout the whole of the Socialist literature it is assumed that the entire people of this country may be divided into two mutually exclusive classes whose interests are invariably and necessarily antagonistic, who take, or ought to take, diametrically opposite views on almost every question which can move or occupy the human mind, and who are bound by an irresistible law to come into deadly conflict with each other.

It is of the greatest importance that the existence of this hypothesis should be realised and its true character understood, for it has a very close bearing upon the whole of the Socialist argument. We shall see that, as a consequence of its acceptance, the declaration of a 'Class War' has taken the first place in the Socialist programme. It is well, therefore, to realise what are the two classes which the Socialists desire to hound on against each other in the interests of peace, and what is the numerical strength of that section of the population which they

tell us is to dominate the rest of the nation, and in whose sole interest society is to be reconstituted.

It is difficult to be precise on this point: the difficulty is due to the extraordinary vagueness of the Socialist literature with regard to matters in respect of which accurate statements are particularly desirable. The most favoured division is between 'Capitalists,' on the one hand, and the 'Proletariat' on the other. But unless we know exactly what is meant by a capitalist and by a member of the proletariat, it is impossible to appreciate the value of such a division. Schäffle, whose earlier opinions Socialists still rely on, gives a definition of the proletariat which is obviously absurd. A member of the proletariat, he tells us, is 'a man who does not own the instruments of his work.' This would include the Governor of the Bank of England, the captain of a ship, the director of a railway company, the writer of a book (which must be printed before it can be circulated), and a very large number of other persons whom the author of the definition beyond all doubt did not intend to include in the proletariat. Nor are we greatly helped by the Socialist definition which apparently divides the population of the United Kingdom into 'Capitalists,' on the one hand, and 'Wage Earners,' on the other. The definition is really quite as absurd as that of Schäffle. While there are many persons who are not wage earners, but are neither capitalists nor owners

of the instruments of their own work, there are also very large numbers of wage earners who are capitalists: that is to say, who receive a part of their income from sources other than wages. Every member of a building society, every investor in a savings bank, is in this sense a capitalist; so is every one who employs any person to do work on his behalf. In view of such cross-divisions as these, it is evidently impossible to take any of the Socialist definitions seriously. But it is perhaps worth quoting some of the figures which have been adopted in Socialist literature as forming the basis of their policy. According to one estimate, printed by the Fabian Society,¹ and for which Mr. Mulhall is responsible, the number of families whose principal members are employed at wages in the industries of the kingdom is placed at 4,474,000, the number of 'persons' at something between thirteen and fourteen millions, and this total includes over four million women. Mr. Bowley, in the 'Statistical Society's Journal,' gives the total number of 'manual labourers,' which is, apparently, understood to be the same thing as wage earners, as thirteen million, and Sir Robert Giffen gives six-and-a-quarter million as the number of families of wage earners, representing thirteen million persons. Mr. L. G. Chiozza Money, M.P., states that the number of persons with incomes above 160*l.* and their families may be taken as five millions,

¹ *Facts for Socialists*, published by the Fabian Society, June 1906.

which seems to be the lowest estimate of the kind. It will be observed that there is considerable discrepancy between the various figures ; but, whichever estimate be correct, one thing is apparent : namely, that the number of persons who are to be put outside the pale, against whom the 'Class War' is to be waged, and who are to be made subject to what the Socialists are pleased to call the 'ruling class,' must be reckoned by millions. Whether by any conceivable manipulation of the figures they can be shown to be a minority of the nation is doubtful.

THE MINORITY WHICH IS TO SUFFER

It has been declared in one of the meanest expressions ever uttered by a British politician that 'minorities must suffer.' Even for those who accept this humiliating doctrine the question of the size of the minority which is to suffer must always be a relevant one, and it is perfectly apparent that, even on the hypothesis adopted by the Socialists themselves, the majority, whose self-constituted advocates and spokesmen they claim to be, is but a slight one. When, however, we remember that in order to arrive at the conclusion which suits their purpose they have entirely ignored the cross-divisions between wage earners and capitalists, which have already been referred to, the value of their assumptions will be properly appreciated.

These facts must be borne in mind throughout the whole examination of the Socialist programme, for, without a full understanding of them, it is impossible to realise the true nature of the claims which are made by the Socialist leaders to establish a class tyranny in this country. With a lack of humour which is characteristic of many of the Socialist publications, one of their pamphlets is headed by the following quotation from a speech of that level-headed individualist Abraham Lincoln :

I say that no man is good enough to govern another man without that other man's consent.¹

President Lincoln's dictum can hardly be accepted as of universal application ; it must, at any rate, be admitted that, for practical purposes, government must sometimes be conducted without the consent of a certain number of the governed. But it would be hard to find two doctrines further from each other than the dictum of President Lincoln, quoted by the Socialist writer as a text for a Socialist pamphlet, on the one hand, and the essential doctrine preached in every line of every Socialist publication on the other. Whether in their own opinion the Socialist leaders are men whose peculiar merit makes them 'good enough to govern other men without their consent' is not definitely stated

¹ *Empire and Murder*, by C. H. Norman, London. The Twentieth Century Press, Ltd., 1906. Circulated by the S.D.F.

in any Socialist publication with which we are acquainted. That nothing these gentlemen have said and done up to the present time is calculated to produce such an impression on the public mind may be safely asserted. But that Socialism, more than any other scheme for managing a nation known to man, does involve *the government of one man by another against his will* is absolutely certain. X

SOCIALIST TEACHING AS IT IS

With this explanation, which is a necessary preliminary to the proper understanding of what is to follow, we may proceed to our examination of Socialism so far as its methods and objects are revealed to us in the ample literature which is now available to the inquiring student. We shall endeavour to show that while the motives which inspire many Socialists are honourable and worthy, while the evils which they discern and against which they protest are real and in urgent need of a remedy, that remedy is not to be found in the proposals contained in the authorised Socialist programme. We shall go further, and we shall endeavour to show that the objects which the Socialists desire to attain, and the attainment of which they declare to be essential to the happiness of a section of the community, are not in themselves desirable ; that if attained they will fail to bring happiness to any section of the community,

but, on the contrary, will greatly aggravate the very evils they profess to remove. We shall further endeavour to convince our readers that the actual teaching of the Socialists is in many respects dangerous and contrary to public policy, and that those who give this teaching are encouraging poor and ignorant people to adopt a course which if followed must inevitably lead to the infliction of cruelty and injustice upon many innocent persons, and must end in disaster to those who are induced to become the instruments of a false and fatal policy. We shall examine the historical antecedents of Socialism, and shall ask our readers whether the record of the past is of good omen as an earnest of the future. We shall devote special attention to a very practical side of our inquiry. We shall deal with the Socialist proposals one by one ; we shall explain their meaning in language which cannot be misunderstood, and shall ask whether the people of England really do desire those things which the Socialists undertake to bestow upon them.

LEVELLING UP *v.* LEVELLING DOWN

Finally we shall pass to the consideration of those parts of the Socialist programme which are open to no objection, which are true expressions of popular aspirations, and which have already been for many years discussed by men of all classes

and parties who have nothing whatever to do with Socialism or with Socialists. We shall suggest that these subjects are well worthy of discussion by moderate and reasonable men and women of every class. And while not pretending that a Socialist Utopia, or any other Utopia, is ever likely to come into existence upon this earth, we shall give some reasons for believing that much can be done, not only to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, but to increase the amenities of life and the powers and opportunities of enjoyment of all classes. And, lastly, we shall propound, as an alternative to the Socialist watchword of 'level down,' the more hopeful and, as we believe, the more profitable watchword of 'level up.'

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS SOCIALISM ?

The Socialism of the philosophers—Socialism as it is being taught—
Municipal Socialism—One word and many meanings

‘WHAT is Socialism?’ is a question which is often asked, and which many genuine seekers after truth profess themselves unable to answer. The difficulty of definition undoubtedly arises from the fact that the term ‘Socialism’ is used to describe, not one thing, but several different things, and that the Socialism of one exponent differs entirely from that of another who lays down the law with equal confidence, and who purports to speak with equal authority.

The difficulty is great, but it is not insuperable ; nay, more, until the difficulty is overcome no serious discussion of Socialism can be undertaken with advantage. If it be true that the same name is used to describe several different things, it is necessary to separate these things from one another before we proceed to examine all or any of them.

At the present time the word ‘Socialism’ is applied to at least three distinct schools of thought

and action ; a fact which many people who approve or criticise Socialist ideas ignore, and of which, in many instances, they appear to be altogether unaware.

THE SOCIALISM OF THE PHILOSOPHERS

In the first place there is the Socialism of the philosophers. It deals, for the most part, with an elaborate analysis of economic and social problems, conducted, as it were, in intellectual space, and with little, and in many cases with no, relation to human life and human experience. Its representatives change : from time to time they are called by different names, and they advance different and frequently conflicting theories. There were probably Socialist philosophers in the days of the early Pharaohs, or under the first Chinese Dynasty, and there has probably never been any succeeding age in which they have been wanting ; for it is one of the curious delusions of the Socialists of this generation that their doctrines, their aspirations, and their methods are in any way novel. In comparatively recent years there has been a rapid succession of Socialist philosophers : such were St. Simon, Fourrier, Lasalle, Karl Marx, and many others. The works of these philosophers are, as a rule, read by a limited number of persons, and are understood by a still smaller number. It is noteworthy that not one of the systems which these great

men have evolved has ever assumed concrete form : human nature has proved too strong for them, and human passions, human affections, human ambitions, and human idiosyncrasies have continued to dominate human life, despite the excellent philosophic reasons which have been given for their entire disappearance from society.

It would, however, be a grave mistake to suppose that the philosophers have had no practical influence upon society, or upon the thoughts and actions of the people who compose it. On the contrary, philosophers are responsible for very much that has been done, or left undone, since the world began. Their opinions, or what are understood to be their opinions, have always had an effect upon the minds of men, sometimes small, but sometimes very great, and have become the inspiration of, and have been claimed as, the sanction for many deeds, good, bad, and indifferent. The society which philosophers have pictured, and whose creation they have considered indispensable to the welfare of the world, has never come into existence. But many of the ideas which they have expressed have been utilised for their own purposes by parties and individuals as weapons in the strife which they have carried on against society as it exists. In no case, however, has the ideal of the philosopher been accomplished, and we may therefore safely leave to students with ample leisure and a taste for doctrinaire philosophy

the task of examining the various sources from which Socialists at the present day have selected such portions of their programme as happen to suit their particular views and ambitions.

THE SOCIALISM OF TO-DAY

What is of more immediate concern at the present time is to study Socialism in the second, and more important, meaning of the word. There are now living in this and in most other countries a considerable number of persons who, having studied with more or less care the works of the philosophers, or having, as is more often the case, dipped into a certain number of little handbooks and leaflets which purport to represent the true opinions of the famous thinkers whose names are mentioned in them, have formulated for themselves a definite policy. This policy they intend, by means which they do not always make clear, but which always include the idea of violence, to impose upon all other persons, however strongly those other persons may disapprove of those ideas. This is the Socialism that matters. As to what it is there is no obscurity whatever: an ample and authoritative literature has made its objects and to a certain extent its methods, clear to all. It is by the light of this complete and authoritative literature alone that we propose to examine the active Socialism of to-day.

THE SOCIALISM OF EVERYDAY LIFE

In addition to the Socialism of the philosophers and the Socialism of the active propagandist there is a third form of Socialism which must also be mentioned and discussed. Little is gained by quarrelling over names, provided we clearly understand that the same name may apply, and in this case does apply, to two totally different things. It would, however, be more convenient, and would be greatly in the interests of clear thinking, if the policy and ideas which come within the third category to which the word 'Socialism' is applied could be called by some other name.

But this being impossible we must be all the more careful to bear the distinction in mind in discussing our subject. It is perfectly true, and has been often said, that there is already a vast amount of Socialism in the organisation of any modern State, and perhaps there is as much in the organisation of our own State as in any other. In any community, however rudimentary, there are certain things which must be done by, and in the name of, the community on behalf of all its members. It would be superfluous, and therefore tedious, to attempt an enumeration of the many examples of such corporate action which are to be found within the limits of our own country. The whole machinery of Government—the Navy, the Army, the Post

Office—are Socialistic in the sense to which we have referred.

So is every municipal enterprise carried on by the representatives of the community, for the advantage, or the supposed advantage, of those who compose that community. There always have been, there still are, and there always will be, great differences of opinion with regard to the extent to which this corporate action can be adopted with advantage. It is indisputable that the tendency has been to extend and not to diminish the area of Socialist enterprises such as we have described. There is grave reason to doubt whether in every case the advance has been justified by its results. But in very many cases it has been justified, and no one would think of going back to the earlier conditions. It is also equally beyond doubt that there are many persons, moderate, reasonable, and honest men and women, who are convinced that it is greatly to the interest of the nation that the rate of advance in the future should be more rapid than it has been in the past, and it would be difficult to find any one who has devoted serious study to our social problems who does not to some extent share this belief.

It is not only important and desirable that these questions should be discussed, it is certain that they will be discussed; and there is no reason whatever why the discussion should not be conducted with

perfect good temper by persons of all opinions, or why action should not be taken to correspond with the movement of a thoroughly informed public opinion. It would be incorrect and absurd to pretend that there is no connection between Socialism of this kind and the party to which reference has been made as representing the active Socialist propaganda of the day. In particular that section of the professed Socialists known as the 'Fabians' attaches great importance to progress in this direction. Many of the publications issued by the body referred to are not only exceedingly well written, but discuss—generally with ability and often with moderation—the question of collective effort. A good thing is good wherever found, and it would be an immense mistake to regard as negligible, or as necessarily open to objection, many of the proposals contained in the publications of the Fabian Society. But it would be an equally great mistake to shut our eyes to the fact that the Fabians do not come into this controversy with clean hands. They are all things to all men, and because some of the able and sincere men who formulate the views of the society occasionally make valuable contributions to the solution of great social questions, it must not be forgotten that the Fabians have deliberately elected to become the supporters of a policy which if adopted will absolutely ~~stultify~~ any good which they might otherwise accomplish. Moreover, they have lent the full weight

of their organisation to men who are openly preaching civil war, the establishment of a savage tyranny, the destruction of family ties, the repudiation of obligations consecrated both by law and honour, and the abandonment of this country, disorganised and unarmed, to the caprice and the ill-will of the nations of the world.

Having endeavoured to explain what we believe to be the essential differences between the three things which are indifferently described by the word 'Socialism,' we shall now proceed to an examination of that form of Socialism which we have represented as being the most active and the most urgently demanding public attention. In order to remove all ambiguity, we shall endeavour to state in plain words what this Socialism is, what are the objects which its promoters have in view, and what are the methods by which they propose to attain them. Having given this explanation, we shall ask our readers to go further, and to consider with us what ought to be the answer to this question: *Socialism being what it is, ought we to fight it?*

CHAPTER III

SOCIALISM AS IT IS BEING TAUGHT

The 'urgent reforms' of the Socialist programme—The available evidence—The Socialist programme—The State regulation of wages

IT must be clearly understood that, in endeavouring to describe Socialism as it is now being taught to the people of England, the writer is dealing solely with Socialism in the second meaning which has been ascribed to it. No reference is made to the Socialism of the philosophers, or to the Socialism which is a necessary part of the machinery of any civilised country, and the extension of which may legitimately form the subject of careful and sympathetic examination.

The Socialism which it is proposed to describe is a definite policy which is being recommended for adoption with the view of obtaining certain results. These results are represented as desirable in themselves, and so beneficial that great efforts should be made to attain them. It would be incorrect to say that, as a whole, the Socialist programme is definite and detailed. That is not so. The initial stages

which are almost always purely destructive, are explained with perfect clearness. The objects to be attained are also made tolerably clear, although there is much variety in the pictures presented by the different artists. But there is one portion of the programme which has hitherto been left in blank, or which, at the most, has been filled in in the most perfunctory manner with vague and nebulous expressions, which convey no information even to the most earnest and sympathetic inquirer. How to get rid of the old institutions is explained with great lucidity. What is to be the dominant power which is to reign in the future, and what is to be the happy condition of the regenerate society which is to come into existence, are points on which there is a fair amount of agreement. But as to the manner in which this society is to live, by what methods it is actually to be governed, what occupations it is to pursue, above all by what means the 'totally new spirit,' which is frequently and justly referred to as a condition precedent to its existence, is to be implanted in the minds of men—these are points with regard to which Socialist literature now, as always, fails to supply us with information.

It is obviously useless to attempt to describe that of which there is no record. But it is possible, and it is necessary, to describe in very clear terms, and apart from the overlay of fine language in which it is usually encrusted, and by which its real meaning is

obscured, the tangible and concrete teaching of the Socialists.

THE CLASS WAR AND THE GOSPEL OF HATE

Socialism preaches the *gospel of War* and the *gospel of Hate*: civil war carried on by one section of the people in order to compel the other section to surrender its liberty, its property, and, what is far more important than either, its convictions, its beliefs, and its natural affections; Hate, not as the spontaneous outburst of ill-will for injury done and intended, but hate taught as the doctrine for a nation's acceptance, taught to the little children in the schools, and taught as the foundation of the new code of ethics which is to make all men equal, happy, and good.

'We are accused of preaching discontent and stirring up actual conflict,' says Mr. Hyndman. 'We do preach discontent, and we mean to preach discontent, and we mean, if we can, to stir up actual conflict.'¹

Charged by his opponent in debate with advocating violence, the Socialist teacher thought it well to qualify this statement.

'We should be fools,' said he, . . . 'if to-day we were to go before the English people, *in the minority we are*, and advocate force.'

¹ *Will Socialism Benefit the English People?* Twentieth Century Press, Ltd., 1907. Circulated by the S.D.F.

That will not do, says his opponent ; what does this denial of the appeal to force come to ? Has not the same speaker written ?—

Gunpowder helped to sweep away feudalism with all its beauty and all its chivalry. . . . Now far stronger explosives are arrayed against Capitalism.

This is not a figure of speech, it is a fact. Far stronger explosives than gunpowder have been used in many places, as any audience to whom such talk is addressed knows perfectly well.

Here is yet another description of that 'Class War' which is preached on almost every page of the Socialist publications :—

We preach the gospel of hatred because, in the circumstances, it seems the only righteous thing we can preach. To talk about the 'Gospel of Love' is simply solemn rubbish. . . . Those who talk of the Gospel of Love, with Landlordism and Capitalism for its objects, want us to make our peace with iniquity.¹

Then comes the qualification for what it is worth :—

We don't preach hatred of men, but hatred of systems, and those features of men's characters which are the outcome of the faults and bad in those systems.¹

These sinister expressions are taken from a pamphlet printed and circulated by the Independent Labour party, and bearing the characteristic title of

¹ *The Class War* : a Lecture by Charles Leatham, fourth edition, I.L.P. Publication Department. Circulated by the S.D.F. See Appendix.

the 'Class War.' The value of the qualification, such as it is, will be understood when it is remembered that nearly half of the writer's countrymen have been specially pointed out as believing in the system and possessing the characters which are here held up as the objects of hatred and obloquy. By a curious irony, of which probably the writer was unaware, he has 'thrown back' with wonderful precision to his true intellectual ancestors; the language he uses is almost precisely that of the Holy Inquisition, a ruling and dominant class regulating the lives of men with the best intentions and expressing the most noble sentiments. It was the regular formula for the Holy Office to shed tears of love and sorrow over the individual, to declare that it hated not him but only his wicked ways, and then promptly to hand him over to the 'Secular Arm,' adjuring that authority to be tender, and perfectly confident that the stake, the rack, and the pincers would do their work.

But, as has been stated, through every line of the Socialist literature there runs this doctrine of the 'Class War.'

Use the suffrage, then, as Social Democrats, not to bolster up any political faction, but *to gain for your class* the control of that England of which you and your fathers have been defrauded.¹

¹ *What Use is a Vote?* Issued by the Executive Council of the S.D.F.

Nor is the Independent Labour party in any way behind the Social Democratic Federation in its war-like intentions. The following is from the preface to the fourth edition of 'The Class War,' already referred to.

Let the Socialists in Parliament and the local bodies introduce any clear general attack upon private enterprise, as they must sooner or later do when they are strong enough, and then we shall see war. If men fight for territory, the flag, or patriotism, will they not fight with tenfold more tenacity for their living, even if that living be as illgotten as the territory?

The answer is that they probably will. As we know that, in the opinion of the Socialists, nearly all the property in this country is 'illgotten,' and that a man who, after a life of strenuous labour, has succeeded in making a small provision for himself and his family is denounced by them as a robber who has stolen what he possesses, the number of persons who will have the effrontery to fight for what they are pleased to call their own may be considerable.

But, indeed, further demonstration, is unnecessary. If the teachers of Socialism had been as silent on the question of the use of force, and the establishment of a class tyranny, as they have in fact been voluble, the evidence against them would still be equally strong. Immense changes are proposed, and it is of the essence of these changes that not only

must they be effected in the interests of one class to the detriment of another, but that they can only be effected by taking from the class or classes which are to be attacked all those things which they value and which they believe they rightfully possess. Nowhere throughout the whole of the Socialist literature is it suggested that these changes can be effected without the use of force, nor, as we shall show at a later stage, do the dishonest proposals to disguise the use of force by giving legal sanction to the violation of men's rights the least affect the proposition.

There must be no mistake, therefore, about the fact that Socialism as it is now being taught does involve the *preaching of Civil War and the gospel of Hate*.

EXPROPRIATION

Socialism involves *Expropriation*. Of this there can be no doubt whatever. The authorities are explicit on the point. The following is taken from the programme and rules of the Social Democratic Federation :—

The 'Class War' may at first be directed against the abuses of the system, and not against the system itself; but, sooner or later, the workers must come to recognise that *nothing short of the expropriation of the Capitalist class*, and the ownership by the community of the means of production, distribution, and exchange can put an end to their abject economic conditions.

Now, expropriation is a long word, but its meaning is perfectly clear. It means taking people's property from them against their will, and it is this which Socialist teachers are recommending their audiences to do. Of course, where the word 'workers' is used something quite different is meant, for millions of workers are also capitalists. What is meant here, as everywhere else, is that A shall deprive B of his property for the benefit of A and others of his class. The suggestion that it may be convenient to wait before starting a campaign of expropriation need not be taken seriously. If it be just and honourable to deprive some millions of Englishmen of their property to-morrow, it is presumably equally just and honourable to do so to-day.

THE DESTRUCTION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

Socialism means *the appropriation by the representatives of a portion of the population of nine-tenths of the private property in the country, the conduct of every private business by State-paid functionaries, the destruction of shops and private enterprises, and interference with the minutest private concerns of everybody in the country.* On all these points the authority is clear and absolute.

Instruct your delegates to proclaim that private property in railways, shipping, factories, mines, and land must cease to be.¹

The following are to be 'nationalised,' that is to say, taken from their present owners and run by elected committees :—All land, and all the machinery of agriculture. The property of all trusts ; all railways, docks, canals, and all great means of transit. All gas works, electric light works, all water supplies, tramways, and omnibuses. There is to be 'public ownership and control of the food and coal supply,' *i.e.* the butcher, the baker, the green-grocer, the coal merchant—all of whom, under the definition given by the Socialists, are 'capitalists'—are to be 'expropriated,' and their business done by committees. All the 'banks,' 'pawnshops,' and 'public restaurants' are to be transferred in the same manner to the same authority. There is a good deal more of the same kind, all of which may be found in the printed programme and rules of the Social Democratic Federation ; but the above will suffice to show what the policy of the Socialists is with regard to the ownership of property and the conduct of business.

¹ *What Use is a Vote?* Issued by the Executive Council of the S.D.F.

THE PROFITS OF INDUSTRY AND THE REWARDS
OF LABOUR

Socialism means *the appropriation by public elected bodies, such as the London County Council and the West Ham Board of Guardians, of the profits of all industries and the serving out of the money thus acquired, and of the articles produced, at the sweet will of these authorities.*

In every previous case a direct quotation has been made from authoritative Socialist literature, but it is impossible to make adequate quotations in this case, for the most careful research fails to discover what the true doctrine is. It seems to be uncertain whether everybody is to be paid the same or whether a scale of wages is to be fixed by the County Council. Nor is there any evidence to show what the wage is to be or what is to be the scale of payment. As to the articles made in the State factories, the State farms, the State sweetstuff shops, and the State literature and newspaper factories there is no clear teaching at all. It appears to be suggested by some that the articles manufactured should be served out as required: a grand piano to A, a sack of potatoes to B, and a pound of sausages or a five-acre farm to C. On this point, however, Socialist doctrine is obscure. Dr. Schäffle, who, until he changed his mind and declared that Democratic Collectivism was impossible, was a great authority among the Socialists,

was apparently of opinion that a reversion to the primitive fashion of payment in kind should be resorted to. In a work entitled 'The Quintessence of Socialism' he says:—

Those who yielded services of general utility, as judges, administrative officials, teachers, artists, scientific investigators, instead of producing material commodities—*i.e.* all not immediately productive workers, all not employed in the social circulation of material—would receive a share in the commodities produced by the national labour in proportion to the time spent by them in work useful to the community.

Evidently Dr. Schäffle at this time was in favour of the sack of potatoes and grand piano system of payment, but there is no evidence that it is universally accepted by Socialists.

The best opinion seems to be that the various elected bodies are to become bankers, merchants, engineers, manufacturers, public-house keepers, newspaper editors, sellers of cats' meat, and of most other things besides. The enumeration may seem absurd, and the statement exaggerated. But any one who cares to examine Socialist literature, from Karl Marx downwards, will find that the facts are exactly as stated. On these points, which the Socialists are pleased to call 'details,' but which in reality are absolutely vital parts of their programme and policy, they are silent. These things are to be done, but how no man knows. Mr. Hyndman, directly

challenged to be explicit on this subject, declared that he

did not expect to have to explain all the details of bottle-washers, cooks, and cabmen in the remote future.¹

He was not asked to do this. He was asked to explain how he was going to give effect to those 'reforms' which the Social Democratic Federation, of which he is a member, has declared 'must immediately be carried through.' Mr. Bradlaugh put the matter in a way that cannot be improved upon. He asked :

Why are these details not worth dealing with? Why do you talk of the bottle-washer?—surely he is as good as a prince. I belong to the bottle-washers, and I want to know how our bottles are to be washed.¹

This is exactly what a great many other people want to know, and the writer is among the number. But, for the reasons given, it is impossible to quote any authoritative Socialist pronouncement on these subjects. They are subjects on which Karl Marx, the great authority of the modern Socialists, is absolutely vague. Schäffle, who purported to reduce the abundant vapour given off by Karl Marx from its gaseous to its solid form, has given us no help to a solution, and none of the minor prophets who have succeeded have made the slightest contribution to our enlightenment.

¹ *Will Socialism Benefit the English People?* Twentieth Century Press, Ltd., 1907. Circulated by the S.D.F.

THE TAXATION OF INCOMES TO EXTINCTION

Socialism means *that the whole of the expenses of the country should be paid by taxes to be levied on incomes which have ceased to exist.* This may seem, and indeed is, a gross absurdity, but it nevertheless forms part of the Socialist programme, as witness :—

The true object of industry being the production of the requirements of life, the responsibility should rest with the community collectively. . . . As a means to this end we demand the enactment of the following measures. . . . 'Abolition of indirect taxation and the gradual transference of all public burdens on to unearned incomes, with a view to their ultimate extinction.'¹

Who is to bear the public burdens after all the so-called 'unearned incomes' have been extinguished is not stated.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EMPIRE

Socialism means *the abolition of the Regular Army, the abandonment of India, and of all those portions of the Empire which are retained by the aid of British troops.* On this point, also, the authorities are perfectly clear. The following is an item in the programme of the Social Democratic Federation :—

The object of the federation is . . . The abolition of standing armies.²

¹ Programme of the I.L.P., 1907-8.

² Programme of the S.D.F., 1907-8.

What we can only hold by maintaining an alien garrison had better be given up.¹

THE MONARCHY

One of the urgent reforms demanded by the Socialists is :—

*The abolition of the Monarchy.*²

REPUDIATION

Socialism means *the breaking of the national faith* with the object of inflicting injury on one set of Englishmen in order to benefit other Englishmen at their expense. As to the fact, there can be no doubt whatever. Among the immediate reforms demanded by the Social Democratic Federation, as officially laid down in the programme of that body, is the following :—

The repudiation of the National Debt.²

A MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM WAGE

Socialism means *provision for everybody above the age of 16 of a minimum income of 78l.*, for it is declared that among the reforms which must be immediately carried through is the legislative enactment of a minimum wage of 30s. for all workers.'

¹ *Social Democracy and the Armed Nation*, written for the S.D.F. by H. Quelch.

² Programme of the S.D.F., 1907-8.

But it is equally urgent that every one whose income exceeds 300*l.* shall be penalised, for we are told that an immediate enactment is necessary

to abolish all indirect taxation and to institute a cumulative tax on all incomes exceeding 300*l.*¹

We have already seen that if the whole, or any part, of this income is 'unearned' it is to be taxed 20*s.* in the pound.

THE ABOLITION OF CHILD LABOUR

Socialism means *the prohibition of all child labour under the age of 16.* It is laid down that, among the reforms which must 'immediately be carried through,' is the following :

'No child to be employed in any trade or occupation until 16 years of age, and imprisonment to be inflicted on employers, parents, and guardians who infringe this law.'¹

THE ELECTION OF JUDGES

Socialism means *the substitution of elected judges for judges appointed by the Government.* It is declared that among reforms immediately necessary is that of

the administration of justice by elected judges.'¹

¹ Programme of the S.D.F.

THE CHARGE AND THE EVIDENCE FOR IT

Objection may be taken to the statements made in this chapter. It may be said that injustice has been done to the Socialists because extreme and unauthorised statements only have been quoted ; that in reality the Socialists do not themselves believe in any of the proposals which have been attributed to them, and that what they really do mean is that all men should unite to improve our municipal administration, to aid those who are in distress, and generally to apply an intelligent public opinion, not only to relieving the sufferings of the very poor, but to ameliorating the condition and adding to the enjoyment of all classes of the population save the very rich. All these things may be said, probably will be said, because they are in accordance with the usual slack methods of thought and reasoning which many people indulge in. But any criticisms of this kind will, in fact, be absolutely unfounded and unjust. The description of Socialism as it is being taught is not the result of a laborious hunt for the extreme utterances of obscure men. It is taken from the authorised publications of the principal Socialist organisations. It is taken from documents which are being circulated by thousands among poor and ignorant people, and, what is more, it refers to those changes which are declared to be of urgent necessity, and which should be immediately forced upon the

people of this country. It is possible and reasonable to say that Socialists do teach these things, and that they are quite right in teaching them. It is also possible to say that the Socialists do teach things, and that they are very silly or very wrong, and in many cases both. But it is not reasonable to say, and it is not possible to say with truth, that the Socialists do not teach these things. They do teach them, and it is well that those who desire to form an opinion as to whether Socialism be a desirable creed or not should know exactly what that creed, as expounded by its leaders, really is.

CHAPTER IV

OUGHT WE TO FIGHT SOCIALISM?

The declaration of war—Why we must fight—Socialism and Christianity—The need for plain speaking—The real danger

OUGHT we to fight Socialism? This is a question which it is necessary to ask because it appears that some persons have not as yet made up their minds upon the subject, and there are some counsellors who recommend, if not an alliance, at least a compromise with those who advocate Socialist doctrines. What those doctrines are we have already seen, and in them we shall find a very direct answer to our question. Whether we like it or not, we must fight Socialism, because the Socialists have already declared open war upon all those who do not agree with them. But, even apart from this fact, there appear to be overwhelming reasons why all those who care for the true welfare of this country should fight Socialism. That a conflict should be necessary is to be deplored; any multiplication of party divisions, any increase of class animosity, in this country is to be deprecated, and every one who takes

part in the conflict, which we believe to be both right and inevitable, should do so without passion, and with a perfectly clear understanding of the issue involved. The Socialists should be combated, not because they are unconventional, or because they are extreme in their views. Nor should we entertain any hostile feeling towards them because they have done their best, as many others have done before them, and are doing now, to bring home to the people of England the truth with regard to the condition in which vast numbers of the people of this country live and move and have their being. On the contrary, we should be grateful to them for what they are doing in this respect. There are many Socialist publications which describe in moving and convincing terms the effect of the inequalities of the distribution of wealth, and the hopeless and unhappy lives of those on whom society, as at present constituted, bears most hardly. Many, probably most, of the Socialists are sincere and well-intentioned. Some of them, no doubt, believe that the policy they recommend is calculated to bring about the objects they desire, and that these objects are in themselves desirable. To pretend that all the Socialist leaders are of this opinion would probably be an exaggeration. Some of them, no doubt, are genuinely ignorant of the nature of the forces which they hope to set in motion ; others there are who are well aware that the promises which they make to their dupes will never be made good,

but are content with the reflection that, whatever happens, the anarchy and breaking-up of laws which are so congenial to their minds will inevitably result.

WHY WE MUST FIGHT

But having made all these admissions, and having made them readily and with conviction, it is still necessary that we should fight Socialism. There are many ways of fighting. The Socialists have openly recommended that which consists in the use of force. It is conceivable that in the long run they may force those whom they attack to meet them on the field they have chosen. If they do, it is just possible that some unpleasant surprises may await them, for it is a curious and characteristic feature of the Socialist creed that its exponents, who are so ready to divide Englishmen into two classes, one of which they propose to ostracise and persecute for the benefit of the other, always seem to assume that those whom they exclude, amounting to at least ten or twelve million persons, are a set of cravens, who not only will submit without protest to being despoiled of all they possess and to being tyrannised over by a number of vindictive doctrinaires, but will be absolutely incapable of holding their own.

This is a grave mistake. Indeed, nothing is more curious than to observe the attitude which

Socialist speakers, inside and outside the House of Commons, adopt towards those English men and English women who do not happen to belong to the particular class of which they themselves are, or for the time being pretend to be, members. This attitude is not calculated either to convince or to conciliate. To hear a Socialist orator calmly speak of all his opponents as ignorant, prejudiced, or selfish, is more grotesque than convincing. After all, the Socialist leaders, to whom the merit of zeal and possibly of good intentions may be freely conceded, do not greatly impress the public as being superior in wisdom, knowledge, and general intellectual qualities to the bulk of their fellow citizens. There are some who may even be of opinion that this is an under-statement of the case. But much more arrogant and more dangerous than the calm assumption of intellectual superiority is the assumption, always tacitly made, and often openly put forward, that the millions of English men and women who do not happen to be paid a weekly wage are to have no place in the sun, are to be denounced as enemies of their country and its welfare, and regarded as being practically outside the pale for all political and social purposes.

It is not necessary to dwell on this theme, though much might be said upon it ; but it is at least well that Socialists should be made to understand that this classification of their countrymen is not well

advised, and is greatly resented. Those persons who happen to work for a weekly wage, and who happen also to share the views of the Socialist leaders, are no doubt estimable people. But the services they have rendered to their country are not so dazzling as to obscure all that has been done, suffered, and endured by those who have not had the privilege of belonging to the new caste. There are tens of thousands of families in England, some rich and some poor, whose members have served, or are serving, their country in every conceivable capacity, not only at home, but throughout the length and breadth of the world. There are few of these families in which there does not exist the treasured recollection of some one member, often of many members, who have devoted a life of strenuous toil and self-sacrifice to the promotion of the nation's welfare. The graves of these men and women are to be found in every land; their courage, their energy, their loyalty, are among the great assets of our people. The class from which they came, and from which many others like them are now coming, is a class to be reckoned with, and it is just possible that when they find that all that they have held to be honourable and of good report is to be attacked, that all which their labours and their sufferings have acquired or established is to be destroyed, and that they themselves are to be levelled down to the position of subjects of a privileged class, they will not accept the situation as calmly and as

obediently as the heads of the new tyranny would wish.

For it is a tyranny, and nothing else, that we are being asked to set up, and that is exactly the reason why, after taking into consideration all the virtues which the Socialists possess and the infinitely greater number which they claim, we should still fight Socialism.

SOCIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY

As has been said there are many ways of fighting. In the last resort there is that which is apparently dear to the mind of Mr. Hyndman. But we have not reached that point yet, and it is to be hoped that we are very far off it, and before the non-privileged members of the community—that is to say, those who do not belong to the Socialist sect—need stand to their guns, there will be plenty of time for quieter methods, and probably the best and quietest method of fighting Socialism is to explain it. Perhaps, when it is explained, a number of those who, either because they think carelessly or because they do not think at all, are ready to stretch out the right hand of fellowship will pause. There are many such persons, men and women, with the best intentions, but with a certain love of that notoriety which is the outcome of eccentricity, and who are fatally susceptible to the power of catchwords—these are the persons who tell us that Socialism is, after all,

the practical application of Christianity. It is true that Mr. Keir Hardie has actually stated that such is the case; but this does not necessarily prove the fact to be true. If those who find this close correspondence between Christianity and Socialism will take the pains to study the Socialist teaching, not as they think it ought to be, but as it really is, they will, perhaps, find some reason to doubt the similarity of the two. It has been well said by some of the Socialist writers themselves that the existence of the ideal community which they hope to create depends entirely upon the growth of a new spirit in the hearts of those who compose it. This is perfectly true, and it would, therefore, seem that if such a community is ever to be called into existence—a community which, be it remembered, is to illustrate the practical application of Christianity—some attempt should be made to inculcate and to practise Christian virtues. It is not easy, however, to find any trace of such an effort in Socialist literature. War, violence, hatred, the setting of man against man, the breaking of faith, the loosening of social ties, these are the doctrines which Socialism is teaching to the people as a preliminary to entering into the perfect state. 'Seek peace and ensue it' is a Christian doctrine. It may be that some Socialists also seek peace, but it is absolutely certain that they do not 'ensue it.' 'I have come not to bring peace, but a sword' are the words of the Founder of Christianity. The

Socialists appear to have adopted these words, but have given them a strange application. It was not till Christianity had created an organised Church, and that Church had become a persecuting and political force, that the application which the Socialists now seem anxious to give to the great pronouncement became a reality. It was then, and not till then, that the sword became the sword of the secular power, the weapon with which an organised tyranny compelled the acceptance of its views by those who neither respected its authority nor believed in its teaching.

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THE NEED FOR PLAIN SPEAKING AND CLEAR THINKING

Remembering these things, we may return once more to our original conclusion: namely, that we should fight Socialism, and should fight it on the perfectly clear and intelligible grounds that, while we recognise the truth and the force of much that is said by Socialists with respect to the dangerous and unsatisfactory condition of the fabric of modern society, we do not, as sensible men with all the facts before us, believe that the society which the Socialists promise to create is one which, if created, would be an improvement upon that which now exists; and are confident that the means proposed to obtain that end are inadequate to the purpose. Finally, we

should fight it because we believe that, while any attempt to secure the objects sought for by the means proposed will produce infinite mischief, misery, and hatred in the community, it may not improbably end in bloodshed, and that the outcome of all this purely destructive work will be to leave us further off than ever from the ideal for which all good men are striving: the amelioration of the condition of those who suffer from the extreme inequalities of our modern social organisation.

In a word, the time has come for plain speaking. Socialism, as it is being taught by a small number of educated persons and by a large number of ignorant persons, is not Christianity, or anything like it: it is not common honesty; and it is a gross and dangerous attack upon the liberties of English men and women. Of course, the amiable persons who are so ready to hold out the right hand of fellowship to the new Communists are not really in favour of civil war, confiscation, the repudiation of all legal obligations, the multiplication *ad infinitum* of Government officials, the abolition or relaxation of the marriage tie, or the transference of all children to a gigantic Foundling Hospital run by half-educated politicians. These and many other items of the Socialist creed they utterly abhor, as would appear fast enough if the new doctrines were applied in concrete form to themselves or their concerns. But when they approve of Socialism, they doubtless

compound with their consciences by making all sorts of fine reservations which they may possibly understand themselves, but which assuredly are not, and never will be, understood by those to whom they address themselves.

If it pleases any one to think that enlarging a London park at the public expense, or paying a large sum of the taxpayers' money in order to transfer the railways from one set of managers to another, is Socialism, they are perfectly welcome to their opinions, and possibly they are quite right. But if they are thinking of these things, the real teachers of Socialism are thinking of something totally different; and words which are intended to express approval of perfectly honourable, and often perfectly feasible, objects are being inevitably translated into an approval and acceptance of the Socialist programme which is now being laid before the people of this country. It would be far better if the speakers who thus strengthen a movement with which they wholly disagree would weigh their words more closely, and would ascertain what is the true occupation of those whom they are so ready to bless. Charles Peace was justly convicted of murder and burglary, but it is an undoubted fact that he played nicely upon the flute and wrote edifying hymns. It is perhaps a good thing to play upon the flute, and writing hymns is an avocation to which many good men have been addicted; never-

theless, any one who recommended Charles Peace as an estimable public character and an honourable associate on account of what may be called his minor accomplishments, would have been making a great mistake.

The illustration may seem a harsh one, but it is not really unjust or irrelevant. It is made, not with any desire of impugning the motives of the very well-intentioned persons of whom so many are to be found in the Socialist ranks, and who have certainly no sympathy with crime or lawlessness. But it is made because it truly and aptly describes the danger we incur by failing to recognise that the greater includes and dominates the less. It may seem at first sight unfair to express any alarm as to the actions of those who have filled so many pages with declarations of the excellence of their intentions. But it must not be forgotten that on precisely the same grounds a plea of 'not guilty' might be put in on behalf of the Commune whose members only interrupted the interminable flow of their generous sentiments and their philanthropic ideas to suppress newspapers, to rob a bank, to murder hostages, or to burn down a city. The Socialists are at this moment urging those to whom they appeal to do things which, if done, would plunge the people of England into civil war, and would steep them in misery such as has never been experienced in the memory of living man. When these leaders have ceased to teach these things

it will be possible to discuss with them in all sincerity propositions which they and many other people believe to be ripe for discussion ; but not till then.

Socialists, like other people, are entitled to be judged by what they have deliberately printed and issued as representing their case. It is to documentary evidence of this kind that reference is made throughout the whole of the present examination. The documents lie before us, and they are plain and unambiguous in their intentions. The leaders of the Socialist party in this country are spending large sums of money in endeavouring to induce their countrymen to engage in a class war ; to ostracise and treat as public enemies many millions of their fellow citizens ; to break the national faith ; to destroy the national credit ; to abandon the national defence ; to punish and persecute individuals who have committed no crime but that of differing from the new tyranny. It may be that, among the various programmes which are now being officially circulated, proposals for transferring the lifeboat service to the State, for proportional representation, for closing of public-houses on Bank holidays, and for running a County Council milk walk in London, are included. None of these things have anything to do with Socialism as it is now being taught, and they can be discussed, and should be discussed, on their own merits. But those who, because they approve of these and similar experiments, give any sanction

directly or indirectly to Socialism as it is now being taught are doing a great disservice to their country.

THE REAL DANGER

Nor should the public be too easily induced to underrate the danger which confronts the country by the reflection that, whatever the Socialist leaders may say, the people of England are neither cruel, dishonest, nor wholly devoid of understanding. All these things are perfectly true, and yet there is a danger. Mr. Hyndman has laid down, and in doing so he has correctly stated the teaching of history, that—

Hungry men make disturbances and riots, but that they never made an organised revolution yet.

It is, says he :—

The best educated and organised and capable men who have always made revolutions in our history.

Now let it be remembered that the only two revolutions which the Socialist writers regard as being worthy of approbation are the great French Revolution and that which took place under the Paris Commune ; and that the only revolutionists of whom they claim to be the successors are the Jacobins and the Communards. It is perfectly true that in both these cases the revolution was made by

men in black coats, well educated, and, in many cases, well-to-do. It is also true that these were not the persons who suffered from the misery which they created. It is the poor and the ignorant who have always had to bear the penalty when they have been left in the lurch by their leaders.

CHAPTER V

THE SOCIALIST PROMISES EXAMINED

A pertinent inquiry—‘The State’ and what it means—‘The State’ as we know it—State interference—Do the people of England want what the Socialists promise?

WE now come to a branch of our inquiry which is most important, and which deals with very practical matters. Hitherto we have, for the most part, discussed what may be called the abstract side of Socialism. We have, it is true, set forth in precise terms, and on the authority of the Socialist associations themselves, the proposals which are put forward, and the immediate adoption of which is declared to be necessary. But we have not discussed any of those proposals in detail, nor have we asked our readers to consider what would be their effect if adopted, or to what extent they are likely to produce the happy results which their authors are always so ready to guarantee as the consequence of their adoption, or rather of their imposition.

It is such an inquiry that we now propose to make. Opinions will, doubtless, always differ with regard to abstract questions of ethics, government,

and the ideal relations between the various sections of the community. We have given some reasons in support of the view that Socialist ethics are not in themselves admirable ; that Socialist views of government are not such as should commend themselves to a free people ; and that the class war which Socialists hope to inaugurate will not be an unmixed benefit to the people of England. But whatever may be said on these subjects, there will always remain a considerable number of persons who will be ready to give their suffrages in favour of any theory, provided it be new, and involves a direct contradiction of the views which have hitherto been generally adopted by their neighbours. ' You must do the sum to prove it,' they will say, and we shall never know what an English Commune can do for us until we have tried.

It will be well, therefore, to give careful consideration to an aspect of the problem about which there can be no ambiguity, and to ask some questions which can be answered ' aye ' or ' no ' without the slightest hesitation by every member of the community. The questions may, perhaps, be best introduced by means of an assertion. We venture to assert that the Socialists are promising to the people of England things which the people of England do not in the least desire ; that in the guise of blessings they are attempting to bestow upon their countrymen gifts which, if accepted, would cause infinite misery ; and which would be rejected with practical

unanimity as soon as their true nature was realised. It will be well to test this proposition. The test can be easily applied. Let it be supposed that all obstacles have been removed ; that Mr. Hyndman and Mr. Grayson, Mr. Keir Hardie and Mr. Bernard Shaw, have actually established their Government, and are about to bestow upon the nation the gifts which they have declared it ought to desire, and the acceptance of which is to bring to their adherents so large a measure of happiness and good fortune. We propose to enumerate those gifts, and, having done so, to ask our readers to say whether we are not justified in asserting that the people of England, independent of party, independent of creed, independent of class, do not want the things which the Socialists desire to give them. In order that the materials for forming a judgment may be available, it will be necessary to restate the offer which is made, and to examine each item in it as a practical proposition.

‘THE STATE’ AND WHAT IT MEANS

The object of the Social Democratic Federation is ‘*the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, to be controlled by a Democratic State in the interests of the entire community.*’¹ In other words, the State is to manage everybody’s business, to interfere in all the concerns

¹ Programme of the S.D.F.

of daily life, to be the sole and universal employer, to be the judge of merit and the earthly Providence of every man, woman, and child throughout the length and breadth of the land. This being so, it is necessary to ask whether the people of England really do want to give these enormous powers to the State, and whether they are so enamoured of State control and State interference as to welcome an immediate and immense extension of both? Mr. Asquith, speaking on this subject, has said: 'It has been our work during late years to emancipate the country from State control. Large areas of our social and industrial life have had to be set free from the misdirected and paralysing activity of the State.'¹ If it be true that the public has for many years past been striving to emancipate itself from State control, is it quite certain that it is in a mood to retrace its steps? 'The State' is a term which is very frequently used in Socialist literature, and to those who have not time or inclination to pause and think, the introduction of this wonderful new power with a capital 'S' is doubtless impressive. But, after all, is it a new power? Is not 'The State' a very old friend whom we have known for a long time, and have not always greatly loved? Undoubtedly such is the case, and before trusting our old friend with unlimited powers over our consciences, our children, and our purses, it may be well to have

¹ *Times*, October 21, 1907.

a look at his antecedents. What does 'The State' mean? It means in practice a certain number of persons selected by a rough-and-ready method of election, which, in so far as it is to be regarded as a test of the true feeling of the electors, is, under our present system, of about as much value as tossing up. For a short and uncertain period the individuals thus selected are endowed with immense powers over the persons and property of their neighbours. 'The State' has many manifestations; it appears to us in many forms. Parliament is one manifestation of 'The State.' A considerable section of the public is already busily engaged in trying to get rid of two-thirds of Parliament, namely, the Monarchy and the House of Lords, and the third portion, the House of Commons, is, in the opinion of many, yearly falling into more deserved contempt for its incompetence and its instability. If there are any sane persons in this country who really desire that the State, as represented by the House of Commons, should regulate their lives and meddle with all their private concerns, we would recommend to them a course of attendance in the Gallery of that assembly. They should be in their places when some matter concerning the welfare of the entire Empire or the most vital concerns of the United Kingdom is under discussion. They should note the empty benches and listen to the ineptitudes which party spirit brings into the discussion of every great problem. They should also

be in their seats when some petty personal scandal, some unworthy incident, some purely personal matter is on the Orders of the Day. The House will be crowded, and they will have an admirable opportunity of judging the tone and temper of the authority to which they are to submit themselves, and whose interference in all their concerns is to prove so beneficial.

The London County Council, which changes its entire outlook on every subject—economic, social, religious, architectural—about every three years, is ‘The State.’ The Poplar and West Ham Guardians are ‘The State’; the tax collector, the rate collector, and the horde of inspectors and surveyors with whom we are all so well acquainted are ‘The State.’ John, Tom, and Harry, who live down the street, are not ‘The State’ to-day; but, if they have no particular occupation and can afford the time to make many speeches and many fine professions as to what they will do with other people’s property if they get the chance, they may become ‘The State’ to-morrow. The fact is, that no amount of fine words will alter plain facts, and there is not the slightest reason to believe that this country will be better governed, or that anybody will be happier or richer because we have added some hundreds of thousands to the number of salaried officials paid to interfere with all the concerns of our daily life, or because we have turned out all the present occupants of our public

offices and have put another set of people in their places. The French Republic is said to enjoy the services of something like a million employees of the Government ; but it has never been suggested that France is very much better off on that account. There are many Frenchmen, indeed, who have expressed the opinion that this swarm of officials is a curse and a menace to their country. In the United States the number of public officials is large, and, from the judges down to the village postmasters, they are constantly being changed in obedience to the caprice of popular elections or in submission to the decrees of more or less corrupt organisations. No fine words are used to describe the system in the United States : it is simply known as 'The Spoils System,' and is regarded as a very congenial soil for growing the tree of corruption. 'The State,' we are told, is to own and control all the means of production, distribution, and exchange. A splendid prospect seen from a distance, but not quite so splendid when we come a little nearer. It is well to put the matter quite plainly. Do the people, say, of West Ham, or the people of Woolwich, really want the West Ham Guardians or the Woolwich Town Council to own all the railways, tramways, cabs, carriages, workshops, machines, tools, hair-dressers' shops, confectioners' shops ; to become the tailors, the butchers, the bakers, and candlestick-makers of West Ham or of Woolwich ; to pay

everybody's wages and to fix the rate of payment, to conduct a compulsory crèche for all the babies, to send all the children to schools where they will learn the 'Red Catechism,'¹ and to fix exactly what every man's income shall be? As a matter of fact, the people of West Ham and Woolwich want nothing of the kind ; and, if anything were needed to cure them of such a longing, a week's trial of the system would do it. Not only is there not the slightest reason to believe that 'The State'—or, in other words, the non-working members of a busy community—can carry on business on a large scale, or on a small scale, with advantage ; but it is practically certain that if the work of the Socialists assigned to the State were undertaken by a committee of archangels it would create so much criticism that it would come to a standstill in a week. Nor is there any reason to believe that, if carried on by a casual crowd of persons, who, for an uncertain period, are supposed to represent the local majority, it would serve any purpose whatever save that of stirring up strife and making confusion worse confounded.

What the Socialists mean by 'The State' is simply the introduction of a number of new men into old places. There will be a Government, an Executive, a Parliament of some kind—probably

¹ *The Red Catechism for Socialist Children*, by A. P. Hazell. Printed by the Twentieth Century Press, Ltd., 1907. Circulated by the S.D.F.

some dozens of Parliaments—and an innumerable host of officials. It is possible that the methods of public administration might be greatly changed. If Mr. Hyndman and Mr. Grayson and Mr. Keir Hardie and Mr. G. B. Shaw, &c., were to be drawing salaries from their ‘comrades’ for governing this country there probably would be a good deal of change; but that, after all, is only a question of *personnel*, about which there is no great reason to invoke high and mighty theories. As for the idea that some new, heaven-born entity, called ‘The State,’ is to descend upon us and alter the whole conditions of our life, it is a patent absurdity which should deceive nobody.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOCIALIST PROMISES EXAMINED—(*continued*)

Equality of opportunity—Equal division of profits—Socialisation of means of production—The taxation of unearned incomes

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

WE are promised equality of opportunity.

‘In a state of nature all animals, at starting, enjoy equality of opportunity. It is obvious that under Socialism all men will be similarly situated.’¹

That all animals in a state of nature at starting enjoy equality of opportunity is of course conspicuously untrue, but independent of this consideration, it may not be quite obvious to some of our readers that the general proposition, ‘all men are animals,’ is of much value in this connection. All pigs are animals, but all men are not pigs. But leaving this doubtful point aside, let us consider the promise itself. ‘Equality of opportunity’ is a fine phrase, but it has no relation whatever to the facts of life, and, despite all the Socialists in the world, it

¹ *Socialism and the Survival of the Fittest*, by S. Connell. Twentieth Century Press, Ltd. Circulated by the S.D.F.

never will have. It is perfectly true that the idea of equality before the law and of the absence of privilege as attached to any class of society are noble ideals worth fighting for, and, if necessary, dying for. Many Englishmen have been engaged in this laudable strife during the past nine centuries, and many of them have lost their lives in fighting for their ideal. But that is not what the Socialists are fighting for. On the contrary, they have told us distinctly, by the mouth of one of their most notorious spokesmen, that they are fighting not to secure equality, but to create a dominant class. But, supposing this were not so, and supposing that the Socialists really were in favour of equality of opportunity, do they seriously think that this is what the majority of Englishmen want? When reduced to terms of common sense, the absurdity of the catch-word is seen. Let us suppose that every one is, so to speak, reduced to 'scratch' in the race of life. Every man to start with nothing at all, or, say five pounds, or five hundred pounds, as the case may be. Given this equal start on January 1, where shall we be on December 31? Will the equality of opportunity remain? Not a trace of it. One man will have buried his talent; another will have used it. One will have turned his talent into five, another into ten. One will be on the up-grade, another on the down-grade, and the next year will begin with a community from which equality of opportunity has

already absolutely vanished. The man who can neither use his fingers nor his brains, the man who has bad manners, or even the man who has an ugly face and an unpleasant manner, will never have the same opportunity as the man of nimble fingers, a quick wit, an attractive manner, and a handsome face. Hundreds of things will be open to the one which, all the Socialists in the world notwithstanding, will always be closed to the other. Are we, then, to have a fresh deal at the end of every twelve months—a sort of annual jubilee for the readjustment of life's handicaps? Every one knows that such an idea is grotesque. Once more let it be repeated that there is a sense in which equality of opportunity has a real meaning: *equality before the law*. But it did not require the Socialists to preach a doctrine which generations of Englishmen have understood perfectly well, and towards the attainment of which they have been striving, and, on the whole, successfully, for many years. This is not the equality of opportunity which the Socialists want. It must never be forgotten that almost the only thing on which Socialists are agreed is that it is their business to fight—to use force, if necessary—in order to create a dominant and privileged class. Let us, then, dismiss this cant phrase, 'equality of opportunity.' What the Socialists promise is not what the people of England want. If those who listen to the Socialist orators realised what the phrase meant they would have none of it. Let

the parents of a boy who is by nature clever and whom they have taught to be industrious ask themselves how they would like to see the doctrine applied in practice. Their son enters a machine shop at the same time as another boy who is lazy and, it may be, incompetent. The day the boys enter their opportunities will be the same; at the end of the twelve months one boy will still be sweeping the floor—the other may be on the road which leads to the management of the concern. The equality of opportunity is gone. Do the parents wish to see it re-created, and their son brought down to the level of his companion? Of course, they want nothing of the kind, and they will not want it any more if the two boys happen to be employed by 'The State' in the shape of the local authority, which, we are informed, 'is to control all the means of production,' than if they were in the employment of a limited company or a private individual.

But, before leaving the question of equality of opportunity, it is just to the Socialists, and to a very large number of men and women who are not Socialists, to say that there is a sense in which the phrase 'equality of opportunity' has a real and beneficent meaning. It is desirable that, as far as may be, the advantages which the State purports to confer upon all members of the community should really be open to all members of the community. As a matter of fact, this ideal has not yet been

attained, and probably, to its full extent, never will be attained. But much more may be done than has already been accomplished. What is called the 'educational ladder' is an example of what is meant. At present many of the educational boons which are conferred by the State, or under semi-national endowments, are not really available to children of poor parents. Much is being done to alter this state of things, and to give to these children 'equality of opportunity' in the enjoyment of a privilege which the nation intends that all its members who prove themselves worthy of it should enjoy.

EQUAL DIVISION OF PROFIT

The profits of labour are to be equally divided among the workers. Is this what the vast majority of English people want? Not the least. It is a principle which they would soon make short work of if any one made the slightest attempt to apply it in practice. Two men are working in a machine shop, one as a labourer, the other as a fitter, or as a foreman. Ask the labourer if he would like his wages levelled up to that of the fitter. Of course he will say 'Yes.' Ask the fitter or the foreman if he would like his wages to be lowered down to the level of the labourer and he will give an answer more forcible than polite. Nay, more, ask him if he approves of having all wages in the shop raised to a uniform level, and his answer

will be equally clear. He will never consent to obtain no advantage whatever from his superior skill and his greater knowledge—the outcome in nine cases out of ten of long application, self-denial, and study.

But it may be said, ‘Oh, this is not what Socialists desire.’ In the first place, it must be stated emphatically that many of them do desire this very thing. But there are others who, seeing how rough a reception such a proposal would meet with in many quarters, are prepared to admit that there must be a varying scale of remuneration, but that the scale must be limited at both ends. There is, apparently, to be a minimum wage and a maximum wage. It is very doubtful whether if a minimum wage were to be universally imposed it would make any particular difference to the wage-earners, for prices would, even under the most elaborate system of State interference, tend to adjust themselves to the artificial condition of things, and the minimum wage would probably purchase about the same amount of commodities as it does now. As to the maximum wage, who is to fix it? On what principle is it to be fixed, and who is the authority who shall say to a man, ‘Your skill, your knowledge, your experience shall not be remunerated for what they are worth?’ For let it be remembered that what a thing is worth depends in no degree whatever upon the theories of any number of Socialists, but upon what other people wanting the thing are prepared to give for it.

THE SOCIALISATION OF THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION

This is a fine phrase, which may mean a great deal or may mean a very little. In the opinion of the Socialists it evidently means a great deal. It means, among other things, a vexatious and intolerable interference in the most minute concerns of everybody's business. After handing over the railways, the banks, and all other large enterprises, 'The State,' *i.e.* the parish council or the Socialist committee at the corner of the street, is to take in hand and regulate the occupations of everybody in the street. In one of the official Socialist publications we actually find a discussion as to whether a woman is to be allowed to own a sewing machine, and we are told, apparently as a great concession, that a dressmaker is to be permitted to own her own sewing machine, *provided no one else be allowed to touch it.* A statement so absurd as this requires to be substantiated. Here is the actual passage, taken from the 'Red Catechism for Socialist Children':—

(Q.) Would Socialists allow any one to have a machine?

(A.) When the person can use the machine for her own use. For instance, Socialists would let a dressmaker have a machine for doing her own work, but not for the purpose of employing others to exploit or rob them.

We believe that when this proposition is fully understood, and when it is also understood that this

interference is to apply, not only to the owners of sewing machines, but to an infinite number of persons who have hitherto been accustomed to get their living with the aid of persons who were willing and anxious to be employed by them, the people of England will reject this 'boon' as decisively as all the others, and among those who will be foremost in rejecting it will be those who now obtain employment from individuals, but who in the future will be compelled to put themselves under the orders, and work under the directions, of an elected committee of local politicians. In a word, the people of England do not desire 'the Socialisation of the means of production.'

THE TAXATION OF UNEARNED INCOMES

The Social Democratic Federation has laid it down that '*a cumulative tax on all incomes and inheritances exceeding 300l. must be imposed immediately.*¹ As we have seen, the Independent Labour party goes a step further, for it has decided that all incomes which it is pleased to describe as '*unearned*' are to be 'taxed to extinction.'² That is to say, those who receive such incomes are to be robbed of every farthing they possess. Here, again, a little explanation is necessary to translate the fine phrases of the official programme, and the oratorical

¹ Programme S.D.F.

² Programme I.L.P.

expressions of the street-corner orator into plain English to be understood of the people. Let us see, in the first place, what is meant by 'an unearned income.' The Independent Labour party, in one of its official publications, has been good enough to explain exactly what it means by an 'unearned income.' The writer of the work in question says that the Socialists have deliberately adopted the definition arrived at by the Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the graduation of the Income-tax.

'The committee,' says the writer, 'could discover no terms capable of expressing the full intention except those in common use by Socialists for many years, viz. "earned" and "unearned." The mere decision to adopt these titles is a practical justification of the old Socialist formula of Prudhomme that "property is robbery."'¹

Incidentally, this passage is a valuable reminder of the harm that Parliament, in its zeal to please everybody, may do by the use of ill-considered and ill-defined expressions. But, leaving that aspect of the question aside, let us see what light this passage throws upon the Socialist proposals. Here is an actual case which arose a short time ago, and was brought to the knowledge of the writer. A medical man, after thirty-five years of uninterrupted toil, had amassed a small competence, which he had actually invested

¹ *Socialism and the Budget.* By H. Russell-Smart. Published by the I.L.P.

instead of putting it in a stocking, and from these investments he drew a small income. Worn out by many years of arduous work, he retired from his practice, and determined to pass the remainder of his days in a quiet retreat far from the scene of his work. It has been decided that every farthing of this man's income is to be considered as 'unearned,' as much 'unearned' as if it had fallen from heaven or been discovered in an old mattress bought at a jumble sale. It is an unearned income of this kind that the Socialists propose to 'tax to extinction.' The doctor in question, having been robbed of every farthing he possesses, will then be in a position to receive a charitable donation, either in money or kind, from the local authority. The amount, apparently, will depend upon the attitude of the local politicians towards him. But before receiving his 10s. a week, or his pair of boots and side of bacon, as the case may be, he will have, we are told, to satisfy the local authority that he cannot work, and 'stone-breaking,' it is explained, will furnish the most suitable test. It is well, therefore, that all English men and women who have made provision for their old age, or who have ventured at any time to put aside money for which they receive interest, should know that they are openly threatened by the Socialists with the taxation of their incomes 'to extinction.' Let those who have invested in the Post Office Savings Bank, in the Building Societies, in

the Benefit Societies, mark this proposal, and, now that it is put before them in plain English, let them ask themselves whether this is one of the reforms which they urgently desire. We are under the impression that here, again, the Socialists have made a mistake, and a very big one, and that the people of England do not desire, and will not submit to, '*the taxation to extinction of all unearned incomes.*'

CHAPTER VII

THE SOCIALIST PROMISES EXAMINED—(*continued*)

The abolition of the Regular Army—The abandonment of India—
The Army of the future

THE ABOLITION OF WAR

THERE are to be no more wars, we are to have no professional Navy and no Regular Army, but a Citizen Army is to take the place of the Regular Army. With regard to these matters, as with regard to a good many others, Socialist teaching is somewhat obscure, and the professors are at variance among themselves. Many of the most ardent professors use arguments which involve the destruction of the Navy, but there appear to be some members who, with more sanity, though less logic, think that the Navy should be maintained. Why this should be so if there is to be no more war, or if the bold citizen, inspired by devotion to the collective idea and to the Government of the new tyranny, is really, as we are so often told, a better man in time of war than the wretched hireling who fights his country's battles for a sordid fee, and who, incidentally, learns

his business, is not quite clear. Further information is required with regard to the fate of the Navy. The doctrine with regard to the Army is much more definite. There is to be no Regular Army, but an immense mob of citizen soldiers is to be called into existence, primarily, it would appear, for the purpose of shooting down other citizens who do not happen to agree with the political directorate of the day. This doctrine finds a very large place in Socialistic utterances. The Citizen Army is to exist in order to make strikes effective, to keep down wicked capitalists, and generally to enable gentlemen like Mr. Keir Hardie, Mr. Grayson, and Mr. Hyndman to use an effective 'argument' with those misguided people who do not belong to the privileged class.

We also learn that this Citizen Army is to exist for the purpose of hurling back the invader, and keeping inviolate the national soil: catchwords largely borrowed from the vocabulary of a neighbouring nation, which has signally failed to accomplish these objects by the means recommended. France has more than once tried to defend her national soil and to hurl back the invader by means of a Citizen Army, and has come to most hopeless and irremediable grief in consequence. But it is really difficult to take all the talk about the guaranteed peace of the world under a Socialist *régime* very seriously. To begin with, from a party which is always preaching war, and which boldly describes its

policy as 'a policy of war,' guarantees of perpetual peace come rather strangely. It is one of the fond delusions of the Socialist party that democracy has a tendency towards peace, and that Socialist Governments are particularly distinguished among all other democratic Governments by their entire freedom from aggressive qualities. Of course, it is a mere commonplace, familiar to every one who has the slightest acquaintance with the history of the world, that the exact reverse is the truth. Democracies have always been warlike, and the more nearly a democratic Government has approached to the Socialist form, the more bloodthirsty and the more ready to enforce its views by the sword has it become.

It is singular, indeed, that a body whose whole talk is of 'war,' and which is not ashamed to put in the very forefront of its programme the duty of declaring war upon everybody who does not happen to agree with it, should be such a firm believer in the advent of an era of universal peace. It is exceedingly doubtful whether any Socialist does in the least believe in the advent of such an era. To judge from what is written and spoken by many of the exponents of Socialist doctrine those who assume the advent of such a happy day with the greatest confidence have really never thought about the matter at all. But, whether this be so or not, it is, unfortunately, true that neither the fact that Socialists

are ignorant of history, or that they decline to think out any proposition which might lead to an unpleasant conclusion, will protect this country from the dangers of war. Indeed, the Socialist attitude with regard to wars and armies, if it is to be judged by the utterances of Socialists in the House of Commons, is almost imbecile. In the first place, they constantly advocate great *reductions* in the Army and Navy. This, in its nature, is not a reasonable policy. It may be quite reasonable, from the point of view of a man who believes that there will be no more war, to advocate the abolition of the Army and Navy. But for a man who knows nothing whatever about fighting by land or sea, and who is constantly boasting of his entire ignorance of these matters, to recommend reductions is manifestly unreasonable. A moment's thought will suffice to make this proposition clear. Navies and armies have only one function, and that is to engage successfully in war. To pay for a navy or an army which will not be successful in war is worse than a folly—it is a crime. If an army exists only to be beaten, it had much better not exist at all. In the ordinary affairs of life most men recognise and apply this reasoning. If a man wishes to build a bridge across a 20 ft. opening he either orders a bridge 20 ft. long or leaves the job alone altogether. He does not, for the sake of economy, order 17 ft. of bridge. But that is exactly what our Socialists in

the House of Commons want to do with respect to the Navy and the Army. They seem to think that fleets and armies can conveniently be bought by the pound, and that if one man or one nation has a ton of the article and the other man or the other nation fifteen hundredweight, the only difference is that one party is a little better or worse off, as the case may be, than the other. Of course, the truth is, as any sensible man will see in a moment, that there is no place at all for armies and navies which are destined to be beaten. Therefore, while Socialists who talk about getting rid of navies and armies altogether may be listened to with a certain amount of respect, those who talk about reductions without any reference to the fighting efficiency of the forces they desire to reduce are guilty of a mere impertinence, and should not be listened to at all.

THE ABOLITION OF THE REGULAR ARMY

It is, however, part of the regular Socialist programme¹ that standing armies should be abolished. The abolition of a standing army may be justified either on the ground that some other kind of army can take its place, and do its work as well or better than the army which has been got rid of; or else on the ground that, as there will be no more war, there need be no more armies. Something has already

¹ Programme S.D.F.

been said with regard to the first of these reasons. Socialists may, and do, assert that a citizen army in the field will get the better of a regular trained army. But the teaching of history in all ages, and under all circumstances, flatly contradicts the Socialist statement. History teaches us that what the Socialists say with regard to the value of citizen armies is the direct reverse of the truth. We may therefore afford to leave that part of the argument aside for the present.

A GUARANTEE WANTED

We now come to the second argument: namely, that as there will be no more wars, there need be no more armies. It is a curious fact that no Socialist is prepared to give a guarantee valid even for a single year that there will not be war. It is no doubt very interesting for the audience at a Socialist meeting in London to be told that war is wicked, and unnecessary, and anti-social, and so on. All these things may be perfectly true. Lightning is dangerous; plague and pestilence are dangerous; but by calling attention to these facts over and over again we do not get rid of the danger. If some one were to convince us that there would be no more thunderstorms, we might dispense with lightning rods; if we were absolutely certain that there was to be no more pestilence, we might pull down our

fever hospitals ; but, as a matter of fact, we have not got, and we are not likely to get, these assurances, and the result is that we still prefer to stick to our precautions where we can. English Socialist leaders frequently go abroad and engage in not very seemly wrangles with 'comrades' from other countries ; but it is noticeable that they never bring back anything of much more value to the cause of peace than a bag of wind. The great nations of Europe do not disarm ; the Socialist orators who propose that they should disarm get a slap in the face even from their own associates, and the preparation for war, and, above all, for war against England, goes on steadily. Here, again, it is well to put matters quite plainly. The people of England do not want what the Socialists declare they do want. It is as certain as anything in the world can be that if the Navy were reduced, and the standing Army abolished, this country would be invaded and occupied within six months, and that though a Socialist orator were stationed at every landing place round the coast, and orated for his full eight hours a day at the public expense, the march of the armed enemy would proceed without one hour's interruption. If any one prefers to exchange the vague pictures drawn by the Socialists for a living representation of the truth, let him read the account of what happened in France in 1870 and 1871 ; what happened in the Southern States of America in 1864 ;

what happened in the Netherlands in 1794, when the Socialists of that day devastated them with fire and sword; they would then, perhaps, be somewhat reluctant to accept the false coin which is offered them at the value placed upon it by the coiners.

THE ABANDONMENT OF INDIA

Before leaving the question of fleets and armies it is worth while to discuss one other aspect of it which ought to be brought home to every English man and woman.

The Regular Army having been got rid of, it is obvious that all those parts of the Empire which owe their existence as such to the protection and authority afforded by the Regular Army must be lost to the Empire.¹ Foremost among these countries is the vast territory of India. That India was won by the sword and is kept by the sword is a fact which the plain teaching of history forbids us to deny. Mr. Keir Hardie, who has made a special reputation for himself by the ignorant, inconsiderate, and cruel things that he has said in furtherance of his political schemes, never said a more foolish thing than that 'what is good for Canada is good for India.'

¹ 'What we can only hold by maintaining an alien' (*i.e.* a British) 'garrison had better be given up.' *Social Democracy and the Armed Nation*, written for the S.D.F. by H. Quelch.

It would be tedious and unnecessary to refute Mr. Keir Hardie's dictum. It would be an insult to our readers, to whatever party or school of thought they may belong, to imagine that they could be misled for an instant by such a blundering phrase. It will suffice for our present purpose to point out that India and Canada differ essentially in the fact that one is governed by the sword and that the other is not. It may be wrong that any country should be governed by the sword ; as a matter of fact, India has never been governed by anything else ; and if we were driven out of it or retired from it to-day, it would be governed to-morrow by a sword not less sharp, and much more frequently and cruelly used, than that which is now in the hands of the British Army in India. A well-known representative of one of the fighting races of India was asked not long ago what, in his opinion, would happen in India if the British power were withdrawn. His reply was more trenchant than polite, but it was true. 'In six months,' said he, 'there would not be a virgin or a rupee left in Bengal.' It is worthy of remark, in passing, that the withdrawal of British troops from Canada has led to no such result ; a fact which would indicate some divergence between the condition of the two countries. But it is exactly this withdrawal that the Socialists advocate. They do not tell the straight truth to their audiences. They do not say we propose to abandon India to plunder and rapine,

to turn every English man and woman out of the Peninsula ; to destroy Indian trade and commerce, and to close the ports of India against the commerce of this country. But that is what they mean ; for this must be the inevitable result of the adoption of their policy.

Do the people of England want these things to happen ? That is a question which can soon be answered if we get rid of the clap-trap in which the Socialist policy is usually wrapped up, and expose it in its naked simplicity.

Let any Englishman stand on London Bridge and cast his eyes down the busy river beneath him. Let his imagination come to the aid of his vision, and let him picture the various scenes of activity which lie between Tower Bridge and Tilbury Dock ; then let him imagine for a moment that the talk of the Socialists has been transformed into a real policy ; let him assume that the British Army has been withdrawn from India, and that India, as an inevitable consequence, has relapsed into a seething tumult of civil war, only to be terminated by the intervention of some strong military Power, carrying with its bayonets a strict system of protection. What will be the result ? The whole of the great industries which we now behold will have been obliterated. What are those industries, and what do they mean to the people of this country ? Here is a brief enumeration of some of the principal items :—

Exports from the United Kingdom to India	£45,830,000
Imports to the United Kingdom from India	26,663,000
Total	£72,493,000

Exported from the United Kingdom to India :—

Cotton goods	£26,466,000
Machinery, metals, railway plant	5,170,000

Imported into the United Kingdom from India :—

Jute	£4,876,000
Wheat	4,276,000
Tea	4,600,000

The figures relating to tea do not include the enormous import from Ceylon, which would certainly vanish if India were abandoned.

No less than 12 per cent. of the total exports of the United Kingdom go to India.

All this will have been destroyed, and with its destruction will have come the ruin and beggary of hundreds of thousands of men and women. The thousands who now handle the goods, the tens of thousands who live by manipulating, distributing, and manufacturing those goods. And last, but not least, the millions to whom those goods represent the necessities of daily life. The great Indian warehouses will be closed, the Indian liners will have ceased to ply, the cessation of the Indian wheat import will have sent up the price of bread, and the destruction of the Indian and Ceylon tea trade will have taken away the principal comfort and solace of millions of families. And what shall we have in

return? The windy talk of Mr. Keir Hardie, Mr. Grayson, and others of their school—adepts, it may be, in destruction, but utterly powerless either to create or to restore.

No; beyond doubt the people of England do not want to lose India, and for that reason, if for no other, they do not want *to abolish standing armies*.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SOCIALIST PROMISES EXAMINED—(*continued*)

The repudiation of the National Debt—The effect of repudiation—
The holders of the debt—What the debt is

REPUDIATION OF THE NATIONAL DEBT

THE repudiation of the National Debt is an important plank in the Socialist platform. It is only necessary to examine the proposal very briefly in order to discover that here, again, the English people are offered, not only that which they do not want, but that which they would consider an immense calamity if they were compelled to accept it. Let us think for a moment what the National Debt is, and what its repudiation would mean. The phrase 'repudiation of the National Debt,' like so many others which are used by the Socialists, fills the mouth and has a fine ring about it.

To wipe out 800,000,000*l.* of debt, and thereby to relieve the taxpayers from contributing some 28,000,000*l.* every year for the payment of interest, seems at first sight an attractive and easy process. But it will not seem either easy or attractive if we

translate the fine words of the orator into the plain prose of ordinary life.

WHAT THE DEBT IS

The National Debt represents sums which have been borrowed by the British Government over a long series of years. The money has been lent by all sorts and conditions of men, and in every single case the amount of the loan and the amount of interest to be paid for it have been sanctioned by Parliament. The greater part of the debt is due to the efforts which this country has had to make in order to protect itself from invasion, and to acquire and preserve the immense additions which have been made to the British Empire since the middle of the eighteenth century. It is quite possible to be of the opinion that some of the money raised was not wisely spent, or that some of it ought not to have been raised at all. But that is not the question which concerns us now. The money was raised at the time on the lowest terms on which it could be obtained, and its repayment, or the payment of interest upon it at a fixed rate, was guaranteed in every case on the faith of the British Government. The rights of the original lenders have passed through many thousands of hands, and every buyer of Consols has paid the full current value for the British Government's promise to pay. It is

now proposed by the Socialists to repudiate the whole of this debt; that is to say, to break the promises made by the British Government, and to bring to absolute ruin a large number of individuals, some rich and some poor, who have committed no sort of crime save that of trusting the good faith of the Government of their country. It must be remembered, too—though the fact does not affect the principle of the question—that not only will thousands of individuals be ruined, but that a very large number of institutions—some public and some private, institutions which provide for honourable and good purposes—will be ruined also. To a Socialist it would probably be useless to point out that such an act as that proposed would be sheer robbery, for he would say, as many of his leaders have said, that, provided it be called by another name, the operation is legitimate.

THE EFFECT OF REPUDIATION

But, laying aside for the moment the question of morals, let us see what would be the result of repudiating the National Debt. In the first place, as has been pointed out, some hundreds of thousands of individuals and a very large number of institutions would be ruined, because their legally and justly acquired property would be suddenly taken from them. The Socialists, who, apparently, are always

looking either at what is going to happen to-morrow or what is going to happen a thousand years hence, seem quite unable to devote their attention to what is likely to happen next year or during the next ten years. The ignorant persons to whom they appeal are led to believe that the 28,000,000*l.* a year required to pay the interest of the National Debt is a sort of tribute levied on the country by a foreign Power, and that the nation is annually made poorer by the amount of the levy. This, of course, is absurd. The interest paid on Consols goes back into circulation every year, and is paid away, principally in wages, with absolute regularity. If the interest ceased to be payable to-morrow, and the money went into the national exchequer, or remained in the pockets of the taxpayers, it would be spent in very much the same way. But the immediate consequence would undoubtedly be that every one who is now receiving employment as a consequence of the payment of the interest on the National Debt would cease to receive that employment. Eventually he might obtain some other work 'under Government,' or he might not. But, for the moment, the result would be as disastrous to those who receive their pay from the owners of Consols as it would be to the owners of the Consols themselves. But this is only a very small part of the business. It is possible to cheat your creditors once, but it is very difficult to do it twice, especially when the sum involved is large and when you happen

to be very well known to the police. A country which repudiates its debt is in the position of a banker who fraudulently misapplies the money of his customers. He does not do it twice, because he does not obtain any more customers. If the Socialists were quite determined that the nation should never borrow a farthing again, one, at any rate, of the objections to their plan of repudiation would be removed. But no such proposition is to be found in their programme. Meanwhile it is noticeable that democratic States have always been amongst the most voracious borrowers. At the present moment the debt of Australia is no less than 243,000,000/., or 60/ per head. Some say that this is a good thing for the Commonwealth, some that it is a very bad thing. But be that as it may, if Australia were to repudiate its debt to-morrow, no one would ever lend it another shilling. Yet beyond all doubt the desire of borrowing, which, indeed, is the craze of all Socialist or semi-Socialist communities, is not in the least likely to pass away. Of course there is always one alternative to a loan; it was well known to and was practised by other tyrants before the days of Socialist tyranny. In the fifteenth century the monarchs of the day hit on the happy plan of what were called 'Benevolences.' They said to those from whom they desired to extract money, 'We do not wish to borrow from you, but we should be exceedingly pleased if you were to offer us a con-

siderable sum in cash ; you are perfectly free agents in the matter, but '—and the 'but' generally meant if you do not give we will take. King John had very much the same idea when he 'borrowed' money from the Jews. He drew their teeth until they came forward in a generous spirit. These things can always be done by a powerful tyrant, but they have an unfortunate way of leaving matters worse than they were, for somehow money slips away and evades capture. The method is, like many other Socialist methods, open to the objection that the thing can be done once, but that it cannot be done twice.

Put quite shortly, the repudiation of the National Debt means the absolute destruction of Government credit, and no man in this country or any other will, from the date of such repudiation, trust the British Government, not even if it be a Socialist Government, with the value of a sixpence. What the Government wants it will have to take by force ; and, as our English history shows, the task of breaking open private strong-boxes is sometimes dangerous to those who engage in it.

It must, of course, be obvious to all persons who have time to think for a moment that the repudiation of the National Debt means also, and obviously, the repudiation of all other debts. To begin with, if the promise of the nation, made through Parliament, is of no obligation, the promise of a town council or a

parish council, made in the name of a majority which has for the moment ceased to be a majority, has certainly no greater binding force. The municipal debt of this country amounts to no less than 544,000,000*l.* Its repudiation must follow the repudiation of the National Debt as certainly as night follows day. In the first place, the policy which approves of the one must necessarily approve of the other ; in the second place—and this is a much more important consideration—the repudiation will be a necessary and certain consequence of the destruction of the national credit. Millions of pounds' worth of Consols are held by corporate bodies ; and as, of course, these bodies will lose the interest due to them, so will their own payments correspondingly cease.

THE HOLDERS OF THE DEBT

But perhaps it will be said that the class which the Socialists wish to set up as the rulers and tyrants of this country do not very much care whether the holders of Consols or the holders of municipal stock are ruined or not ; that it is, indeed, a matter which solely concerns the negligible millions of the population who do not happen to be working for a daily wage. We have already given some reason for believing that this view is altogether erroneous, and that the destruction of the national credit must inflict irreparable injury upon all classes alike. But it may

perhaps be useful to point out that, even on the comparatively narrow lines of the argument which has just been submitted, the class for which alone the Socialists profess to cater will be great and direct sufferers from repudiation. One example alone will suffice to prove the truth of this statement. At the present moment a sum of no less than 419,950,000*l.* is invested almost entirely by the particular class referred to above. The particulars are as follows:—

Members		Amounts invested
14,000,000	Friendly societies	£49,000,000
120,000	Workmen's compensation schemes	200,000
11,600,000	Trade unions	6,000,000
600,000	Building societies	68,000,000
2,200,000	Industrial and provident societies	50,000,000
42,000	Loan societies	250,000
60,000	Railway savings banks	5,500,000
1,700,000	Trustee savings banks	61,000,000
9,700,000	Post Office Savings Banks	180,000,000
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40,022,000		Total £419,950,000

Some of these are doubtless duplicates. But there are omissions from the list. It has been estimated that the so-called working classes now own invested property to the amount of 600,000,000*l.* sterling.

The whole of this vast sum of money will be confiscated, or will melt away into nothing. To investors in the Trustee and Post Office Savings Banks alone the effect of repudiation would be immediate and terrible. No less than 240,000,000*l.*

worth of the deposits in these banks is invested in the National Debt, and the National Debt, as we know, is to be repudiated.

Lastly, it must be clearly realised that repudiation can never cease with the repudiation of national or municipal debts. When the Government of his country has set him the example, the individual citizen, ruined by the action of his rulers and demoralised by their teaching, not only will, but must, repudiate his own debts too. Even the most lively imagination fails to picture the condition of a community of forty-five million people, hitherto entirely dependent upon the maintenance of a great system of national credit and upon the regular exchange of cash and commodities with people in other lands, suddenly plunged into the moral and financial chaos which must inevitably follow the repudiation of the National Debt.

And let it be remembered, in conclusion, that this particular policy, *The Repudiation of the National Debt*, has been deliberately included in the Socialist programme, and is one of the boons which are offered to a portion of the people of this country as a reward for their support. We venture to assert most emphatically that the people of England do not want to *repudiate the National Debt*.

CHAPTER IX

THE SOCIALIST PROMISES EXAMINED—(*continued*)

The abolition of the Monarchy—The election of judges—The prohibition of child labour—Class rule and the class war

THE ABOLITION OF THE MONARCHY

ANOTHER of the reforms which the Socialists have determined must be 'immediately carried through' is '*the abolition of the Monarchy.*'¹ It is not desirable, nor is it necessary, to devote much space to an examination of this further boon offered by the Socialists to the people of England. It is sufficient to say that if the Socialists are really of opinion that the people of this country desire to exchange the rule of their present sovereign for that of a 'Commune,' of which the rulers are to be the leaders of the Social Democratic Federation, they are very much mistaken. In including this item in their programme they only furnish one more example of their profound inability to understand what it is their countrymen really do want. Of this we may be perfectly certain, that the people of England do not desire the '*abolition of the Monarchy.*'

¹ Programme S.D.F.

ELECTED JUDGES

It is declared to be necessary that the following 'reform' 'must immediately be carried through,' *'the administration of justice by judges chosen by the people.'*¹ A long experience has taught the people of England to believe that the best way to obtain competent and impartial judges is to select men specially fitted, by their accomplishments, their legal knowledge, and their character, for the post, and, having selected these men, to put them in a position in which they shall be absolutely independent, unmoved by fear, favour, or affection, and certain that if only they do what they believe to be just and true they will be supported by the nation to whom their lives are dedicated. It is for these reasons that the people of England have thought well to appoint their judges for life, subject to removal only by the Crown on a joint address from both Houses of Parliament. It is for this reason that the salaries of the judges have been placed upon the consolidated fund, and it is for this reason that the judges are protected by a rule which, alas! is too often broken, from animadversion and attack in the House of Commons, a purely partisan assembly utterly incapable of discussing any question in a judicial spirit.

The Socialists have discovered that in regard to all these matters the English people are wrong, and they have discovered, or believe they have

discovered, 'a better way.' We say they believe they have discovered it; but in this, as in so many other instances, they are only raking up a soiled object from the rubbish heap of the past. The election of judges by a popular vote, with its corresponding condition of their dismissal by the same authority, is a system which has been tried and failed many times in the world's history. There is not space here to confirm this general statement by a long historical retrospect. It will, perhaps, serve the purpose if we content ourselves with examining the institution as it at present exists, for it actually does exist at the present moment. The Supreme Court of the United States is not an elected court, and its members hold their offices for life. It has a far higher reputation than any other court in the United States, and is, in some respects, the most powerful and influential tribunal in the world. But the Supreme Court is the exception, not the rule, in the United States, and the election of judges by a popular vote and for a limited period only is the rule throughout the Republic. Here is what a competent critic has said of the system :—

By the wisdom of the Constitution it is decreed that American judges shall be elected by the people, which means that in practice they are chosen by the party bosses. The party 'bosses' being corrupt, they nominate judges, not for their learning in the law, or for their intellectual ability, or for their impartiality, but for their usefulness to the managers of the party that carries its ticket.¹

¹ *Times* Leading Article, Oct. 1907.

It is true that this judgment has been criticised and corrected, but the correction is furnished by way of protest against the suggestion that the whole of the United States suffers from the abuse of which the nature has just been indicated. Sir Frederick Pollock has pointed out¹ that, while popular election of judges is now the rule in thirty-three States, in several of the leading Eastern States and some of the Southern the Governor of the State nominates, with the advice of the Senate or Council, and that in a few cases the Legislature elects. In 1890 the State of Mississippi gave up the plan of popular election and reverted to that of nomination. But it will be observed that, though the explanation qualifies the original statement, it does not modify in any way the description of what the popular election of judges has, in fact, degenerated into.

Here, again, we believe that the Socialists have made an entire mistake in judging the tone and temper of the English people. The people of England do not believe that the principle on which their forefathers set so much store, and which they established with so much effort, is wrong. They do not want their judges to be involved in the narrow and sordid conflicts of politicians, or to become the sport of fickle-minded electors. Once more we venture to assert most emphatically that the people of England do not desire that the *judges of the land should be elected*.

¹ *Times*, Oct. 22, 1907.

THE PROHIBITION OF CHILD LABOUR

Yet another Socialist reform which 'must immediately be carried through' is *the suppression of child labour*.¹ 'No child to be employed in any trade or occupation until sixteen years of age, and imprisonment to be inflicted on employers, parents, and guardians who infringe this law.'

This item of the Socialist programme stands on a very different footing from many of those which have hitherto been mentioned. Like all the others, it is set down as a reform which is to be adopted immediately. There are probably very few thinking people in the country who do not in principle, at any rate, support the view that the period of childhood and early youth should be devoted to enjoyment and instruction, and not to regular and monotonous work on an industrial basis. Every person who has the means which permit him to do so does, as a matter of fact, withhold his children from professional work until they have at least passed the age of sixteen. It is evident that want of means and opportunity alone compel poorer people to adopt a different course. Children are not sent to work at the age of twelve years for their own good, but because the necessities of the parents govern the situation. It would undoubtedly be a very good thing if the opportunities of the well-to-do could be extended to

¹ Programme S.D.F.

all classes. There must always be exceptions ; but, allowing for such exceptions, there is no reason why we should not look forward to the day when no child will be employed in any factory or in any regular and monotonous occupation. But, while frankly admitting the excellence of the Socialist idea in this particular case, we must still ask whether, if this 'boon' were conferred to-morrow, it would prove much more acceptable to the people of England than the other and much more doubtful benefits which they are promised.

It is curious to note that in this, as in many other instances, men are ardent Socialists until Socialism, to use a vulgar expression, 'comes down their own lane.' The great cotton industry of Lancashire, the wool and worsted industry of Yorkshire, and many other industries in a less degree are at the present time dependent upon child labour. It is interesting to observe that as lately as the autumn of 1907 a deputation waited upon the responsible Minister to urge upon him the desirability of raising the age of half-timers from twelve to thirteen. The desirability of the change was not denied, but it was not considered possible to give effect to it.

Those who have any acquaintance with the cotton trade are well aware that that great industry, employing as it does no less than half a million persons, is conducted upon the most minute margins of profit and loss. The rate book of the cotton

trade, in which wages of every kind of work are calculated out to the tenth of a penny, is a miracle of painstaking and intelligent computation. These fine calculations are absolutely necessary. Both employers and employed know perfectly well that the trade is, so to speak, balanced on a knife-edge; and that any sudden increase of cost, whatever may be its cause, is likely to upset the balance, and turn the hardly won profit out of which operators as well as employers obtain their living, into a loss. The fierce competition of the world, especially of those countries in which child labour and long hours are prevalent, has to be met, and the persons principally concerned are only too well aware of the fact. It would be curious and interesting to know whether the representatives of the cotton workers in Lancashire, experienced men such as Mr. Shackleton and Mr. Gill, would really regard the compulsory adoption of the Socialist reform as a 'boon.'

It is probable that they would not so regard it, and that at most they would look upon the proposal as an ideal to be aimed at, and not as a change to be imposed on Lancashire without delay, and with the full terrors of the criminal law and the gaol behind it. The moral of all of which seems to be that even a good thing may become evil and mischievous if it is forced upon the community without thought and consideration, and that in this, as in so many other matters, the Socialists have failed to under-

stand the true temper and the real aspirations of the people on whose behalf they assume to speak, and for whose benefit they are so anxious to play the part of a special providence.

CLASS RULE AND THE CLASS WAR

Socialism means a *bitter war of classes and the creation of a dominant class using and possessing power and privilege for its own benefit*. There can be no doubt at all as to the fact ; the claim is written large on every line of the Socialist literature. Whole publications are devoted to advocating class war, and Mr. Keir Hardie's statement stands on record as a frank and open avowal of the intentions of himself and those who follow him. 'I have tried,' says he, 'to make my own class the ruling class, and it is going to happen.' We venture to believe that in putting forward these claims and recommending this policy the Socialists are making yet one more mistake, and are again offering to the people of England a boon which they do not desire, and which, if they fully understand its nature, they will most certainly reject. We venture to believe that the opinion of the majority of English men and women coincides very closely with that expressed by Mr. Bradlaugh when he said :

Class war is murder ; class war is fratricide ; class war is suicide.¹

¹ Speech in reply to Mr. Hyndman. See *Will Socialism benefit the English People?* Twentieth Century Press, Ltd.

We venture to believe that English men and women will not hail with satisfaction the creation of a new dominant and privileged class ; we entertain this belief because the whole history of England for 800 years past supports the opinion. For 800 years the people of England have been struggling against class domination and privilege. That the Socialists should support Mr. Keir Hardie's claim is not remarkable ; it is merely an example of the way history repeats itself. The extreme representatives of every powerful class in every age have expressed themselves in almost the same words, and have acted on exactly the same principle. It is not necessary to blame Mr. Keir Hardie or his predecessors. He is acting, and they no doubt acted, conscientiously. He thinks, and they thought, that one class is better than all others, and that that class ought to rule. In the Roman Republic the Patricians considered that none but themselves were fit to fill any of the public offices, and by law they kept all the public offices to themselves. Torquemada, the great Spanish inquisitor and persecutor, was positive that his class—that is to say, the Church—was the best, and ought to be the ruling class, and he put to the torture those who did not agree with him. In England we have a series of object lessons. At one time the Church sought to be, and, to a great extent, was, the ruling class ; and it used its opportunity to surround itself with an infinite number of privileges. At a later

date the Barons became all powerful: they held the kings in awe, and oppressed the people for their own advantage. They owed their position partly to their swords, partly to their wealth, but principally to the special laws which they passed, and which conferred upon them special privileges and immunities. After the Barons came the Crown, arrogating to itself hitherto unheard-of privileges, and using those privileges for its own aggrandisement. Then came Parliament. The history of the Long Parliament, with its sordid and disreputable ending, is one long record of privilege and its abuse. Since then other classes in a lesser degree, but in the same manner and with the same result, have used their power to confirm old privileges or to create new ones for their own benefit. And now, in perfectly natural and historical sequence, we have Mr. Keir Hardie following in the steps of Thomas à Becket, King John, the Earl of Warwick, and the members of the Rump Parliament, and declaring that his class, and his class alone, is to rule; and, like those who have gone before him, passing exceptional laws to secure the ascendancy he seeks to establish.

It will be seen that the lesson of history is uniform; class rule has always meant class privilege.

But history has more than one lesson to teach us, and, happily, our English history is particularly rich in its teaching. There have always been men ready to fight for class supremacy; we have seen that there

still are such men. Luckily, there have always been, and there still are, men to whom the supremacy of a class was, and is, detestable. For the last hundred years the story of political and social life in England has been a record of the surrender or the removal of class distinctions, and it is gratifying to think that those who have been foremost in this good work have almost invariably belonged to a class which had a privilege to surrender, or a right which it was ready to share with others. Ecclesiastical privilege, aristocratic privilege, judicial privilege—all these and many others have disappeared, not only with the good will, but in many cases with the ardent co-operation of those who had enjoyed them. To say that no traces of old class privileges remain would be untrue. They remain protected, not by the law, but by custom and the slow change of habit in this country. Nevertheless, for a century past, there has scarcely been a British statesman worth the name who has not recognised and given effect to the great truth that class rule is an evil, certain to lead to abuses, and contrary to the public interest. Let those, therefore, who look with sorrow and alarm upon the creation of a new dominant class remember that they have on their side the whole tendency of modern thought, and the examples of thousands of English men and women who have worked steadily and faithfully for the highest good of their country.

CHAPTER X

SOCIALIST TAXATION

Robbery by Act of Parliament—The criterion of just taxation—A patent fallacy—An example from Barrow-in-Furness

ROBBERY BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT

‘Get wantonness confirmed by Act of Parliament an honesty,
And so received of all.’

IT would almost seem as if the authors of ‘A Wife for a Month’¹ had had in their minds the developments of modern Socialism when they wrote these lines, for they exactly describe the attitude of mind of many Socialists towards the policy which they propose to pursue. Among the various methods of redistributing the property of their neighbours which commend themselves to the Social Democratic Federation, and especially to members of the Fabian Society, is what may be called the legal and statutory method. It is one which finds peculiar favour, because it has a superficial appearance of honesty which commends it to those persons who still retain the old-world prejudices against robbery with violence.

¹ Beaumont and Fletcher.

‘Every good citizen is bound to obey the law. Let us then make a law by which all those citizens who do not belong to our sect shall be compelled to surrender their property, and the problem of the transfer of their goods will be solved. A man who resists the law is a bad citizen. A bad citizen not only may but must be punished. Here, then, are morality and legality arrayed on the side of the highwayman, and the victim becomes at once the lawbreaker and the wrongdoer.’ Such, apart from the fine language in which the proposition is generally concealed, is the essence of the Socialist proposals with regard to taxation. It is well to state the matter clearly, because many soft-hearted, and possibly soft-headed, persons who have not time or inclination to think, have a tendency to accept the proposition provided only it be properly disguised. In the form in which it is usually presented to nervous people the proposition is generally stated in terms less crude than those which have been cited above. ‘Parliament,’ we are told, ‘already has the power to tax the community to any extent; it exercises that power to the extent of raising a revenue of some 170,000,000*l.* per annum. Many of the contributories pay against their will, but they have to pay nevertheless, and both law and public opinion would condemn them if they refused to pay. The amount of taxation is only a question of degree. If Parliament may tax a man at the rate of one

shilling in the pound upon his income, it may with equal propriety tax him at the rate of 5s., 10s., or 20s. in the pound. This statement is not only plausible, but is true. It is possible to conceive a national emergency in which the State would be justified in taking all the goods of all men to save the existence of the nation. But, because this general proposition is true, it does not in the least follow that the particular propositions put forward by the Socialists are true, and the fact is only one more proof of the danger of incorrect reasoning.

JUST TAXATION

Taxation to be just must be imposed in the interests of the nation, not of a class. It must be imposed with the object of securing a benefit and not of inflicting a penalty. And, lastly, it must be imposed in such a way as not to destroy the sources from which it is obtained. The Socialist proposals violate all these conditions; the taxation they propose is purely in the interests of a class, it is vindictive and punitive, and, above all, it is necessarily self-destructive, and consequently cannot be permanent.

That a party should commit itself to such a series of errors may seem strange, but it ceases to be strange when we realise that the whole Socialist system of economy is based upon a patent and far-

reaching fallacy. It has been laid down by the Socialist writers as an incontrovertible proposition that 'it passes the wit of man to conceive of any method by which the poor shall be made richer which does not necessarily involve as a corresponding consequence that the rich shall be made poorer.'

A PATENT FALLACY

It would be hard to find a more crude and patent fallacy than that which is contained in this so-called axiom. The fallacy is, indeed, so glaring that it seems inconceivable that it should carry weight with any but the most thoughtless and the most ignorant. Unfortunately, it is to the thoughtless and the ignorant that the Socialist appeal is made. There is, of course, one case in which the enrichment of one person is the direct and instant consequence of the impoverishment of another. For instance, A, possessing one pound, meets B, who has five pounds, and, putting a pistol to his head, orders him to stand and deliver. B, in fear of his life, does stand and deliver, and, as a consequence, the transaction ends by A having six pounds and B having nothing, and to this extent the Socialist axiom holds good. It will be observed, however, that the total wealth of the community, as represented by A and B, remains as before, and that the transaction is attended by consequences which in our present society, at any rate,

are considered undesirable. Among them is the possibility that what A has done to-day B, by the same warrant, may do to-morrow, and such reprisals may be continued *ad infinitum*. It will be seen that some Socialists do actually contemplate methods which are not essentially different from that which has been described; they do intend that one class shall put a pistol at the head of another and compel him to hand over. It would scarcely be profitable to debate the wisdom of this proceeding viewed from the ethical standpoint. The Socialist who says, and professes to think, that in compelling those who are not of his persuasion to surrender what they have hitherto called their property he is doing right is naturally unmoved by any reference to the Eighth Commandment. He feels he is doing a laudable and justifiable act. To argue with a highwayman and to endeavour to convince him that his profession is not an honourable one, or one which is approved by society at large, is to waste time and temper. The highwayman has probably formed his own views on that question before taking to the road. But it may be very useful for the traveller to inform him that he has nothing about him but a crossed cheque, of no value to any one save the owner; that he intends to make a good fight for the retention of that cheque; and that, as he observes the police are already approaching, his would-be despoiler will be well advised to take to his heels. Something of the same kind

should be pointed out to those Socialists—if there be any—who really believe that one part of the community will be made richer or happier by the simple process of robbing the other part. It will be well to point out to them that the taking of other people's property by force is not always an easy operation; but it is infinitely more important that they should be made to understand that the spoliation of one half of society not only cannot possibly enrich the other half, but must inevitably involve the whole of society in a common misfortune.

Apart from the crude method of redistributing wealth which has just been described, there are no other conditions under which the mere process of making A poorer can be relied upon to make B richer. Let us take a single example of what usually happens in the world in which we live. A few years ago the foreshore at Barrow-in-Furness was a deserted and desolate expanse on which, perhaps, a few persons obtained a precarious livelihood by digging for sand eels. Then came a change. Messrs. Vickers and Maxim set up their great works in front of Walney Island. Presumably Messrs. Vickers and Maxim have got rich as the result of their enterprise. Have the inhabitants of Barrow-in-Furness become poorer in consequence? The question need only be asked to demonstrate its absurdity. Nor does an examination of the converse proposition

lend any support to the Socialist axiom. If that axiom were true, it is obvious that the impoverishment of Messrs. Vickers and Maxim ought to be followed by an increase in the wealth and prosperity of the great working population of Barrow. Every one knows perfectly well that the exact contrary would result. The same conclusion is arrived at if we examine the case of any ordinary business. It is part of the Socialist scheme that the owners of capital should be taxed practically to the full extent of their incomes, and by this process we are told the money which they now receive will in some mysterious way be transferred to those whom they now employ. Let us take the case of a limited company which employs a thousand hands in a large factory. In good times the shareholders, perhaps, make from five to ten per cent. upon their capital. In bad times they make nothing at all. But the wages they pay are maintained unaltered throughout. Now comes the Socialist remedy. The shareholders are taxed, not only to the full extent of their profits, but are compelled by law to surrender the greater part, if not the whole, of their capital. What will happen? If the tax is not absolutely destructive of all profit, the shareholders will consider whether it is best to reduce the scale of their operations, or to give up the business altogether. If, however, the tax approaches the figure approved by the Socialists, the latter course

will be inevitable. The business will be closed, the shareholders will get as much out of it as they can, and will hasten to invest the proceeds in some country where the blessings of Socialism are unknown. Perhaps they will not succeed in doing this, in which case they will be ruined. But does any human being suppose that the thousand hands who have been employed in the business will be one whit happier or better off in consequence? The workers in our great Yorkshire and Lancashire factories are far too clear-headed to be under any illusions on this point. They know perfectly well that the consequence of such a change would simply be to fill the North of England with a hungry population, without work, without wages, and without hope of a return to a better state of things. They know perfectly well that, by merely making the employers' business impossible, the employed will not be benefited. In other words, they know that the Socialist axiom is absolutely untrue. The process which we have described above is exactly that on which the Socialists rely to improve the condition of the workers of England.

This statement may be denied, but the denial can only come from those who are totally unacquainted with what Socialist teaching is; or from those who, knowing what it is, attempt to conceal the truth from the public. For the benefit of the former class we propose to make a brief examination of Socialist methods of taxation, with the object of

showing, in the first place, that they are based upon the utterly erroneous theory that the impoverishment of one class means the enrichment of the other ; and, in the second place, that they offend against every one of the principles which ought to characterise just taxation.

CHAPTER XI

SOCIALIST TAXATION—(*continued*)

Class taxation—Punitive taxation—Compensation—Self-destructive taxation

CLASS TAXATION

IT is obvious that Socialist taxation is to be imposed in the interests of a class; the fact has been made abundantly evident throughout these chapters. There is no pretence whatever that the taxation is to fall on all classes alike, or to be for the benefit of all classes alike. On the contrary, it is plainly stated that one section of the community is to lay the other under contribution; that nothing is to be contributed by the party of ascendancy, but that the whole tribute is to be taken from those who are to be excluded from power. It requires little argument to show that this is an evil policy. We have already departed too far from the old English principle that taxation and representation should go together. At the present time vast numbers of persons exercise political power who pay no taxes at all. It is true that there are also many persons in poor circum-

stances who pay an amount in indirect taxation—principally on alcohol, tea, and sugar—which, in comparison with their incomes, may be called heavy. But this affords no justification for the view that these persons should be relieved from taxation altogether. The obvious remedy is to alter the incidence of indirect taxation, so that it shall not fall almost exclusively upon a few of the necessities of life. So far from it being desirable that the whole taxation of the country should be levied upon a very limited number of persons, there is reason for believing that the country would gain if taxation were more widespread than it is at present. It is well that those who exercise political power should be made to feel the weight of their responsibility.

PUNITIVE TAXATION

The Socialist scheme of taxation also transgresses against the rule that taxation to be just should be imposed with the object of securing a national benefit, and not of inflicting a penalty. Ample reasons might be adduced in support of this very obvious proposition. But perhaps the most cogent reason against the Socialist plan of punitive taxation is that, once adopted, no limit can be placed upon it. It is clear from the passages we have already quoted that under the new dispensation certain members of the community are to have the

right to say exactly what amount of property they consider to be objectionable, and are to be entitled to punish persons found guilty of possessing such amount by confiscation. But it will be easily seen that a principle of this kind once admitted is capable of no limitation. No natural law defines the point at which the possession of property ceases to be a virtue and becomes a crime. No law, save the caprice of the mob which happens for the moment to be in the ascendant, can draw a distinction between property which is 'justly' acquired, and, therefore, may be retained, and property which is 'unjustly' acquired, and, therefore, must be confiscated. The minimum which commends itself to the majority to-day may be reduced to-morrow, and the methods of acquisition approved by one committee may be condemned by another. The Socialist orators at the street corners who are less careful to qualify their doctrine than some of their leaders, are wont to appeal to their audiences somewhat after the following fashion :—'Comrades, here are men with ten thousand a year. We do not propose to deal harshly with them. All that they have they have robbed from us.' (This is one of the cant phrases picked up from French sources, and much favoured by platform orators.) 'We only propose to take 5000*l.* from them, we leave them 5000*l.*, and that is quite enough to get on with.' There are good reasons for deploring the inequality of incomes, but there are no

good reasons for depriving a man of property merely because he possesses it. Moreover, it is perfectly plain that the principle which permits the community to punish a man who has ten thousand a year is equally good as applied to the man who has five thousand, two thousand five hundred, five hundred pounds, or one hundred pounds a year. To sanction punitive taxation is to let loose the unbridled passions of man without any power of arresting or directing them. We have spoken of the doctrine of the street-corner orator, but it would be unjust to that individual if it were not made perfectly clear that, in comparison with his chiefs, he is a moderate and reasonable man. It must be clearly understood that the taxation proposed by the Socialists is, for the most part, purely punitive, as much so as that which Brennus extracted from the conquered Romans, or that which Tamerlane inflicted upon a refractory tribe. 'All unearned incomes are to be taxed to extinction,' not for national needs, but because the new tyranny does not approve of the methods by which they have been earned.

That humorous capitalist, Mr. Bernard Shaw, tells us that landlords should be fully compensated for the land of which they are deprived, but that the compensation should be obtained by taxing them *at least 19s. in the pound.*¹ It is the fashion to say

¹ Address to the Students of University College, London, October 23, 1907.

friendly things about the Fabian Society, and to laugh at Mr. Shaw's witty paradoxes. There is no reason in the world why those who believe in Fabian doctrines should not support them ; only it is well that they should understand exactly what those doctrines are. The proposal just referred to is merely a synonym for 'stealing.' For those who believe in stealing it is a good doctrine. But those who do not agree with the proposition when translated into honest English would be well advised not to accept it, because it is wrapped up in a cant phrase or two.

COMPENSATION

And here it may be mentioned that the whole question of compensation is one which has evidently caused some difficulty to the Socialist leaders. A curious examination of the question is to be found in the works of Karl Koutsky, a well-known Continental Socialist, whose books are circulated by the S.D.F. After carefully weighing the question of compensation or no compensation, he decides in favour of the former. But the methods by which he proposes to give effect to his intention are curious and instructive. He perceives clearly enough that if the compensation is to be real, the campaign of confiscation which is to result in the destruction of capitalists will, in fact, only recreate the condemned class. He admits with perfect frankness that the

obvious remedy would be to tax the recipients of the compensation to the full extent of the money received by them, a simple plan which has already commended itself to Mr. Shaw. But Mr. Koutsky is acute enough to perceive that capital is a shy bird, and that those who have received the value of their confiscated possessions may transfer their cash to some country where Socialism is unknown. To guard against such an unfortunate result he makes the following amazing proposal. No actual payment is to be made to those who are nominally compensated, but they are to be credited in the books of the State with a certain number of tickets, available only for the purchase of commodities from the State warehouses, but not available for the payment of wages, and of no value outside this country. If the person possessing the credit offers the tickets in payment of wages, or attempts to leave the country, the whole of his credit will be promptly cancelled. As Mr. Koutsky points out, by this clever device the State will be given a hold upon every man, and will be able to prevent his escaping with his ill-gotten gains. To such a point of all-pervading tyranny and individual surveillance would a Socialist *régime* inevitably bring us.¹

¹ See *On the Morrow of the Social Revolution*, by Karl Koutsky circulated by the S.D.F.

SELF-DESTRUCTIVE TAXATION

Lastly, a word must be said with regard to Socialist taxation judged by the light of the third principle which should characterise taxation which is just and reasonable. It is obvious that if taxation is to be of any value to the community it must be imposed in such a manner as not to destroy the sources from which it is derived. Every one knows that even under the present moderate system of taxation it is quite possible to reach a point at which the yield of the impost diminishes. Some striking examples of this simple truth have occurred in connection with the recently imposed beer duties and duties on railway tickets in Germany. But with the Socialists it is not a question of overloading a tax ; their intentions are quite clearly avowed. Their taxes are to be imposed with the object of destroying the resources of the taxpayer. There is to be a cumulative tax on all incomes above 300*l.*, and 'unearned' incomes are to be 'taxed to extinction.' Land is to be taxed to its full value, and, in fact, every one capable of paying a tax is to be regarded as a criminal and treated as such. It seems scarcely necessary to use arguments against propositions so foolish and extravagant, but it would be a mistake to pass them over, because they are the actual proposals which are being made by the Socialists, and which ignorant and credulous crowds

are being induced to accept as a real solution of their difficulties. Moreover, it is advisable to dwell upon this question of Socialist taxation, because what is true of the extreme doctrine is scarcely less true of the doctrine in its modified form. The moment taxation begins to become punitive, it ceases to become effective. It is possible to rob a man of all his possessions once, but it is difficult to do it twice. Moreover, as soon as he knows he is liable to be robbed he will do his best to get out of the jurisdiction. For this reason, if for no other, every Socialist scheme, however attractive in appearance, should be carefully examined. Its object may be admirable, and, if it can be accomplished without injury to the community, may be quite unobjectionable. But so long as its accomplishment depends upon the result of punitive taxation, it should be condemned. It should be condemned on the ground of principle, because punitive taxation is unjust and impolitic, and it should be condemned on the practical ground that such taxation always fails because it tends to destroy the sources from which it is derived.

We have sought in this chapter to make it clear that the Socialist proposals for relieving one portion of the community at the expense of another are unsound ; that it is not true that the impoverishment of the well-to-do results in the enrichment of the poor ; that proposals for spoliation do not lose their

character because they are disguised under the form of taxation ; and that a law, unless it be inspired by the principles of equity and justice, may be as much an act of violence as the summons of the highwayman who offers to his victim the alternative of ' your money or your life.'

CHAPTER XII

THE HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF SOCIALISM

An old story retold—Socialism in action—The Socialist succession—
The typical qualities of Socialism in action

AN OLD STORY RETOLD

IT would probably be unjust to the Socialist leaders to suggest that they claim any particular novelty for their proposals, or that they are unaware that the promises and threats which form the staple of their programme are, for the most part, mere repetitions of the stock phrases which have done duty over and over again on the Continent any time during the last hundred years. Indeed, the dependence of our English Socialists upon their German and French masters accounts in great measure for their adoption of proposals which are altogether alien to the English temperament and repugnant to English ways of thought. The jargon of the French Revolution and the long-winded philosophical abstractions which were fashionable in Germany in the latter half of the last century constantly appear in the writings

of modern English Socialists, whose strength certainly does not lie in originality. But it is most important to note that, while the teachers, as a rule, know perfectly well that they are merely telling an old story over again, the vast majority of their pupils have no such knowledge. To them the ideals and promises of the Socialists come as a new revelation. It is inevitable and natural that those who are under such a delusion should give an attentive, and, indeed, a sympathetic, hearing to men who come to them as the prophets of a new faith, the founders of a new and regenerate society, in which new principles and new ideas are to replace the worn-out beliefs and conventions of a suffering and a weary world. Who would not welcome such promises as those which are made by the Socialists? Who would not be ready to exchange the disappointment, the drudgery, and misery of life, as it is, for the bright existence which is guaranteed to all who are privileged to enter into the glorious Promised Land?

Of those to whom the Socialists address themselves ninety-nine out of a hundred honestly believe—what their teachers intend they shall believe—that the experiment they are invited to make is a new one. It is well that those who have fallen into this error should be undeceived. It is well that they should understand clearly that the Socialist doctrines, so far from constituting a new gospel, are merely a repeti-

tion of the phrases with which thousands of equally enthusiastic and fluent talkers have endeavoured to capture the attention of the public in days gone by. It is well that they should understand that the Promised Land into which they are invited to enter is in truth a well-known desert in which many deluded men have already wandered, in which they have dwelt for a brief unhappy period, and which, like the arid steppes which Ghengis Khan conquered, are marked only by the whitened bones of the victims of tyranny. Ghengis Khan is dead and forgotten; the sufferings of those whom he tortured and slew scarce occupy a page in history, for the world is forgetful, and time heals even the deepest scars. But memories would be short indeed if the recollection of what Socialism incarnate has been, and of the things which it has accomplished in days none of which are distant, and some of which are in the recollection of living men, were to pass from the minds of men.

Socialism is not new as a creed, and, what is much more important, Socialism is not new as a concrete working scheme. We have quoted the saying that there are many Socialists, but no Socialism. The saying is true of the present day, but it is not true of all time. Socialism has had its opportunity, Socialist Governments have existed, and the men who composed them have had ample opportunity of giving effect to the magnificent

prophecies which they, like their successors, have never wearied of making to a credulous world.

Socialism has been tried, and Socialism has failed. It is of supreme importance that the new generation which now listens with sympathetic attention to the fomenters of a great class war should understand clearly what are the true historical antecedents of their would-be leaders, and what are the credentials which they bring with them.

SOCIALISM IN ACTION

We have said that Socialism has had its trial. It is probably true to say that it has had its trial many hundreds of times since the world began ; but we will content ourselves with an examination of the three experiments which the Socialists themselves claim as being illustrations of Socialism in action. The first is the great Anabaptist movement which convulsed the western half of Europe in the sixteenth century, and which culminated in the siege and capture of the town of Munster. The second is the Jacobin period of the French Revolution. The third is the Paris Commune of 1871. It may be said that we have no right to introduce as examples of Socialism in action episodes which the Socialists themselves would repudiate as illustrating their principles. But we have no intention of making any such mistake. We have selected the three periods

referred to because they have already been selected by the Socialists themselves. It is to the works of well-known Socialists, who are, for the most part, now taking an active part in preaching Socialist doctrines in England, that we have gone for our authority in every case.

The curious story of the Anabaptist movement is not well known to the majority of Englishmen. A few words will be said in the following chapter with regard to what actually took place during the progress of that movement; but here it will be sufficient to show that, such is it was, the Anabaptist revival is recognised by the Socialists as an example, though it may be an imperfect example, of the application of their principles to the affairs of everyday life. Among the various authorities who have described the rise and fall of the Anabaptists we have selected for our present purpose Mr. Belfort Bax, who, it appears, is himself an ardent Socialist, and is the author of some of the most important documents now issued in the interests of the movement. He is quite clear as to the blood relationship between the Anabaptist movement of 1525 and the Socialist movement of to-day.

‘We may regard Anabaptism,’ says Mr. Bax, ‘as the culminating effort of mediæval Christian Communism, which saw in the communisation of worldly goods (understanding by this the economic products designed for

consumption) the farthest goal of man's social existence. The modern notion of the socialisation of the means of production was not as yet thought of, as it was not even conceivably possible at the then stage of economic evolution.' ¹

In other words, the Anabaptists did their best, according to their lights ; they had the true Socialistic spirit, but their opportunities were unhappily limited. We shall see that, despite these limitations, the Anabaptists made very good progress down the path which their better-equipped successors have trodden in later days.

THE SOCIALIST SUCCESSION

In answering the question whether the Socialists of to-day regard themselves as the true successors in title of the French Revolutionists of 1795, it would be sufficient to refer to Socialist literature generally, for the claim is everywhere advanced, and is abundantly justified. But it is well to be precise. And here, again, to avoid any ambiguity, we propose to go to the fountain-head, and to quote unimpeachable Socialist authority. There lies before us a work, entitled 'The French Revolution,' by E. Belfort Bax, and in it we find some very in-

¹ *The Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists*, by E. Belfort Bax. wan Sonnenschein.

teresting information. In the first place Mr. Bax tells us that

the real Socialist Communist revolution did not begin till after the 10th August 1792.¹

He says, with perfect truth, that on that date

the first part of the French Revolution may be considered as complete. The middle-class insurrection proper had done its work. The importance of that work from certain points of view can hardly be overrated.

No student of history can deny the correctness of this view. It is the work of this first period of the Revolution in which all classes took their part that has lived, and that has contributed greatly to the making of modern France. It was then, and not till then, that, as Mr. Bax tells us,

the period of the ascendancy of the 'people' began, and lasted for two years.

The new revolutionary municipality, or Commune of Paris, was now, for the time being, the most powerful executive body in all France.

We shall see further on what this all-powerful body did for the 'people' in whose name it acted. Meanwhile, let us return for a moment to our point: namely, the question of the kinship between the Government of the Jacobins in 1793 and the

¹ *The French Revolution*, by E. Belfort Bax. Swan Sonnenschein. Circulated by the S.D.F.

programme of the Socialists in 1907. On this point Mr. Bax is explicit.

‘The party of the Mountain and the Jacobins,’ he tells us, ‘the Babœuf conspiracy, the Chartist movement, the days of June, 1848, the Commune of 1871, are all so many stages in the awakening of the proletariat to the full consciousness of itself, which it attains in modern Socialism.’ And again: ‘The Commune of 1793 may be taken as the representative in the revolution of the proletarian interest pure and simple.’

Let the reader bear these words in mind. It is *the proletarian interest pure and simple* which modern Socialists desire to make the dominant power in England. It is to the proletarian interest pure and simple that Mr. Bax assigns, and justly assigns, the full and sole credit for the government of France during the two years of Jacobin supremacy. It is the heads of this Government that Mr. Bax recognises as the political and intellectual predecessors of the Socialists of to-day, and it is the Government of France, at a time when these men exercised absolute control, which he recognises as a true example of Socialism in action.

That the Socialists of to-day claim to be, and are, the true successors in title of the Paris Commune of 1871 is a point which they themselves have been at pains to establish.

‘The Commune of Paris,’ says the Socialist historian, ‘is the one event which Socialists throughout the world have agreed with single accord to celebrate. . . . The

Commune is a landmark as being the first Administration manned by the working classes, having for its more or less conscious aim the reorganisation of social conditions—the transformation of a civilised society into a Socialist society.’¹

Now that we have placed it clearly on record that the three great outbreaks which have been referred to were true examples of the working of Socialist principles, it will be well to recount, as briefly as may be, what actually happened during these selected periods of history. Such a recital is necessary, for, unluckily, the readers of history do not form a majority in this country, and memories are very short. Many of those even who were living during the Commune have forgotten—or, perhaps, never really knew—what actually took place in the stricken city of Paris; and to the majority of those who belong to a later generation the name of the Commune conveys no idea at all. To many it might just as well signify a person, a place, or the name of a sect.

THE TYPICAL QUALITIES OF SOCIALISM IN ACTION

The three typical periods of Socialist activity are separated from one another by considerable intervals of time, and differ from one another in some important particulars. There are, however, certain

¹ *A Short History of the Paris Commune*, by E. Belfort Bax. The Twentieth Century Press, Ltd., 1907. Circulated by the S.D.F.

features which are common to them all, and which because they are characteristic of and inseparable from practical Socialism demand special notice.

In each case the leaders of the movement have put their claims to support very high ; they have all invoked the most sublime principles ; they have attributed to themselves abnormal and peculiar virtues ; and they have held out the most alluring prospects to all those who undertook to follow them faithfully. The Anabaptist prophets promised a new heaven and a new earth. The Jacobins and the Communards contented themselves with guaranteeing to their dupes the enjoyment of an earthly Paradise. In each case the great watchwords—or should we call them the great catchwords?—of ‘ Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity ’ played a leading part. In each case the finest humanitarian sentiments were to be found in the written and spoken expositions of the new doctrine. It is true that in all the three cases referred to the promises were made to the ‘ Elect ’ only. Torment in the next world, or ruin, torture, and death in this world, were the portions assigned to those who were outside the fold. It is also true that in all three movements a minority claimed the right to coerce, and did in fact coerce, a majority.

Nor are the three movements alike in their inception and their main principles only. At every stage we see similar forces producing identical results.

The Government, which is, in theory, purely democratic, and depends upon the people's will, becomes the Government of a narrow and tyrannical oligarchy. Liberty is instantly strangled, Fraternity gives place to deadly hate and internecine feuds, while the only trace of Equality is found in the equal zeal with which one section after another strives to trample its rivals under foot. In each case war and bloodshed, cruelty and rapine, become the order of the day, and the only industry which flourishes is that of 'delation,' the dirty business of the informer, which is steadily carried on in order to supply the mock tribunals with a due supply of victims. Lastly, the end of each movement is the same. There is a period of anarchy, then fierce resentment against an intolerable tyranny, a welter of bloodshed, and finally the sweeping away of the whole devastating apparatus of injustice, cruelty, and folly which have been the sole outcome of the Socialist experiment.

CHAPTER XIII

SOCIALISM IN ACTION

The Anabaptist movement—The Socialists of 1793—‘Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity’—How to deal with the Opposition—The ‘Class War’

THE ANABAPTIST MOVEMENT

LET us now turn our attention to the actual record of the three famous examples of Socialism in action which are referred to in the previous chapter, and see what encouragement they afford to those who are tempted to bring about a repetition of them.

The great religious revival known as the Anabaptist movement began in January, 1525, and was practically ended by the capture of the town of Munster in June, 1535. As already pointed out, the essence of the movement was its Communistic character. All things were to be held in common; passive resistance was to be the rule of life, and salvation was to be the guaranteed reward of all those who, by accepting the new doctrine, entered into the ranks of the elect. Five years after the commencement of the movement there were already

thirteen different and recognised varieties of the new doctrine. It was interpreted to enjoin a strictly ascetic life, or, by a slight development, a life free from all restraint, in which every kind of indulgence was lawful. The elect could commit no crime, and, therefore, it mattered not what crimes they committed. The elect were to hold all their property in common, but that was no reason why they should not possess themselves of the property of other people. Celibacy was declared to be a higher state than matrimony, but, all things being in common, another man's wife came within the rule, and the rule thus interpreted was duly honoured. The doctrine of passive resistance gave way to the practice of fierce and aggressive war.

At length it was formally announced that the New Jerusalem had been definitely established in Munster, and in that unhappy town the leaders of the movement established themselves and began to carry out their famous experiment in practical Socialism. How the experiment was carried out may be briefly stated. John of Leyden, the principal prophet, the self-elected representative of the will of the people, the servant of the democracy, promptly declared himself 'King,' provided himself with a golden crown, a costly chain, and magnificent robes at the public expense. As a further tribute to the principles of equality he created twelve 'Dukes.' Setting a precedent which later imitators

have strictly followed, he established an arbitrary court, which, on the accusation of private informers, condemned to death all persons whose existence was found inconvenient to the 'King.' Men's houses were entered and plundered, and their goods appropriated by those who had sufficient force to take and keep them. The 'King' decreed that polygamy should be compulsory, and did full honour to the new law by marrying fifteen wives.

Then came the end. A wretched story of non-combatants starved to death between the conflicting armies; of anarchy, of betrayal, of the capture of the town, and the horrors of sack and reprisals. The 'King' himself, detected in an attempt to escape, was dragged from his hiding-place and put to a cruel death. The name of John of Leyden is still remembered; his doctrines have not yet been generally adopted, but his exploits have furnished the material for a well-known opera. Such is a brief sketch of the first modern experiment in practical Socialism. Such is the Government from which the Socialists of to-day are pleased to derive their intellectual descent. It must be admitted, however, that in every way the leaders and promoters of the first Socialist experiment were infinitely more reputable and worthy of respect than their successors of 1793 and 1871.

THE COMMUNE OF 1793

Having traced the fortunes of the Anabaptist movement, 'the culminating effort of Christian Communism,' we now proceed to a brief examination of the Jacobin Revolution of 1793, the second of the three examples which the Socialists themselves have chosen as illustrating Socialism in action. With its immediate offspring the Commune of 1871, it may be fairly described as the 'culminating effort of pagan Communism.' We have pointed out elsewhere that the Socialist historian, in a work adopted and circulated by the Social Democratic Federation, has deliberately chosen the date of the establishment of Jacobin rule at the end of the year 1792 as marking the moment when the true Socialistic experiment began, and has limited the period of its successful operation to the two succeeding years. It is of what happened during the selected years that we propose to give some account.

The watchword of the Jacobins was the famous motto, 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.' Their avowed object was the establishment of a free Democratic Government, depending directly upon the popular will. They were, *par excellence*, the champions of 'The Rights of Man.' Of the 'Duties' of man they said little and thought less. They were to shine as a light and example to all the nations which still sat in darkness and error. Many volumes might

be filled with their beautiful sentiments and their attractive promises. But it is not necessary to repeat the sentiments or to recall the promises, for they are to be found, copied almost verbatim, in the Socialist literature of to-day. What the Jacobins professed and what they promised are unimportant, for they regarded none of their professions and performed none of their promises. What they did is important, and of this, therefore, we propose to give some account, relying upon the statements of our Socialist historian, whose actual words we shall quote throughout.

‘LIBERTY, EQUALITY, AND FRATERNITY!’

In August, 1792, the period of the ascendancy of the people began. The new revolutionary Municipality of Paris was now for the first time the most powerful executive body in all France.

It is noteworthy that, as in every other Socialist movement, this all-powerful body was not only a self-selected oligarchy, created without the sanction of any popular vote, but which, throughout its whole existence, notoriously represented only a minority of the people of Paris and an insignificant minority of the people of France. Its first work was characteristic. It established an ‘Extraordinary Tribunal.’

‘The National Assembly’ (that is to say, the representatives of the nation) ‘hesitated to agree to it, whereupon it

received a message from the Commune that if such a tribunal were not forthwith constituted an insurrection would be organised the following night which would overwhelm the elect of France.'

By the end of the month matters had progressed. Danton, the impassioned advocate of 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,'

boldly urged that a policy of terrorism should be adopted to first intimidate the reactionary population of the city, and, through them, that of the whole country.

The 'reactionary population' meant the vast majority of Frenchmen who did not agree with the Revolutionary Committee. The advice was taken :—

The gates of Paris were closed, and domiciliary visits were made during the night, so large a number of suspected persons being arrested that the prisons were filled to overflowing.

The next step taken in the interests of 'Liberty and Fraternity' was to murder the untried prisoners. A gang of three hundred men visited the prisons.

The prisoners were severally called by name, their cases decided in a few minutes, after which they were removed, nominally, to another prison to be released. . . . No sooner had they reached the outer gate than they were met by a forest of pikes and sabres . . . those whom the representatives of the Commune disapproved of were immediately butchered. Upon them the pikes and sabres at once fell, in some cases veritably hewing them to pieces.

The Princesse de Lamballe was among the number.

'Her head was struck off, and her body stripped and disembowelled. A Sansculotte' (*i.e.* a supporter of the new Socialist Tribunal) 'boasted of having cooked and eaten one of the breasts of the Princess. Probably,' says our historian, 'about twelve hundred persons in all perished.'

And he adds significantly, and with absolute truth :

there is no doubt that the principal actors in these events were either under the orders of, or were at least in communication with, the Commune.

In other words, it was the full-fed, black-coated gentlemen who, as Mr. Hyndman tells us, 'make revolutions'—the gentlemen who wrote the Socialist pamphlets of the day—who were responsible for this bloody work.

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE 'OPPOSITION'

The next step was to make the tyranny of the minority secure. There was a party in the Convention known as the 'Girondists': they were Revolutionists and Republicans, but they were neither Socialists nor Communists. The Girondists, we are told,

were the party of orderly progress, sweetness, and light, the men who dreaded all violent, *i.e.* energetic measures. Such men, however well-intentioned they may be, owing to

the vagueness of their fundamental principles and their class sympathies must always in the long run become the tools of reaction.

Let our readers mark the close resemblance of these words to the cant of to-day. It was necessary in the interests of 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity' and of the Social Democratic Commune to get rid of the 'party of orderly progress.' The Social Democrats rose to the occasion. Marat was one of the most active, as he was unquestionably one of the vilest, of the leaders of the Socialist Commune. He it was who, in strict accordance with the political economy which then, as now, was preached by the Socialists, suggested that a few of the forestallers [*i.e.* corn merchants] who were helping to keep up the price of bread should be hanged at the doors of the bakers' shops.

Marat it was who 'issued his memorable appeal calling for the heads of traitors,' the traitors being his political opponents and some of the most honourable and patriotic of living French Republicans. Marat, the instigator of massacre, the cruel and persecuting journalist, who with Robespierre directed and inspired the work of the Revolutionary Tribunal, took the case of the Girondists in hand.

'Marat,' we are told, 'who had been the life and soul of the movement throughout, now dictated the names of the proscribed and the form of the resolution from the Tribunal.'

From that moment the fate of 'the party of orderly progress' was sealed. All the leading Girondists were arrested, and in October twenty-two of them were guillotined. A few months later Marat himself perished, stabbed in his bath by a woman who conceived herself entitled to avenge by a private crime the commission of so many public villainies. The Jacobins lost their chosen leader, and doubtless the cause of 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity' suffered by being deprived of such a champion. But Marat is happily not without a memorial. It is of him that our historian writes in carefully chosen words:—

Thus perished the first great vindicator of the rights of the proletariat.

It is devoutly to be hoped that the proletariat, which, we are told, is soon to become 'the ruling class,' may not produce many more heroes of the same type.

THE 'CLASS WAR'

But the murder of the Girondists was not the last of the triumphs of the Socialist Commune. The King was guillotined; the Queen, whom our Socialist author, in the charitable language of his tribe, describes as 'an obscene abortion,' followed him to the scaffold, and over thirteen hundred French men and women shared the same fate. The Provinces

refused to pay homage to the new tyranny, and the same methods of persuasion which had succeeded in regulating public opinion in Paris were adopted outside the capital.

Lyons and Toulon were visited with a fearful vengeance. Lebon worked the guillotine at Arras. Couthon, the disciple of Robespierre, ordered wholesale massacres. Fréron, the Dantonist, made his holocausts at Marseilles and Toulouse. At Nantes, Carrier, another commissioner, inaugurated his horrible Noyades, or drownings, in which those suspected of royalism or moderation were placed in boats with false bottoms and drowned in the Loire. In some of these cases a man and a woman were tied together naked. This was called a Republican marriage.

During the whole of this time the perpetrators of these atrocities were pouring forth sonorous platitudes of exactly the same kind as those which are now being printed and circulated by the men who claim to be their successors in title. Nor were these fine sentiments unaccompanied by acts. The things which the Socialists of to-day promise the Socialists of 1793 did. The law of 'the maximum' was passed, and the plan of regulating prices 'by Act of Parliament' was tried. It failed disastrously, as it always has failed and always will fail. The Bourse was closed, and paper money was issued, but, strangely enough, no one was made richer or happier in consequence. Capital, it is true, was for the moment destroyed; but even this does not appear to have greatly benefited the 'proletariat.' Five thousand

francs' worth of paper would scarcely buy a pair of boots, and even the greatest enemies of capital require boots. The property of the Church and millions of pounds' worth of private property were confiscated in the name and for the supposed benefit of 'the people.' In a word, the policy of forcible expropriation which is now being recommended by the Social Democratic Federation was put into practice on a grand scale. Our historian tells us that 'two-thirds of the houses in Paris became national property.' But, alas! even this spirited effort of pure Socialism failed to produce any great amount of happiness.

CHAPTER XIV

SOCIALISM IN ACTION—(*continued*)

Expropriation and its results—The reign of 'Reason'—The Army under S.D.F. principles—'Right about face! Quick march!'—The Socialist Navy—The tree and its fruit

EXPROPRIATION AND ITS RESULTS

THE first half of the Socialist ideal had undoubtedly been realised; the rich had been made a great deal poorer, thousands of them had been reduced to actual beggary and starvation, and thousands had been driven forth to wander in strange lands. And yet, strangely enough, nobody seemed much happier or better off than before. The second half of the Socialist miracle hung fire. The rich had become poorer, but the poor had not become one whit richer. On the contrary, what little they had they had for the most part lost.

Let us turn once more to our Socialist historian for information on this point. This is what he tells us:—

After the fall of the Girondists . . . confiscation both of the lands and movables of the nobles and suspects went on at a greater pace than ever. But it was various agents

of the Government in the Departments who made vast fortunes out of them by their clever manœuvres. . . . The net result of the sales of the confiscated lands ordered by the Committee of Public Safety was that large tracts of public land were sold in a lump as before ; but this time they went into the hands of a new class of thieves.

The ninth Thermidor (the day of Robespierre's fall) arrived without the working classes of the towns having touched any of the 'goods' of the emigrants, the clergy, or the suspects ; while the peasantry had to be satisfied with here and there a few crumbs in the shape of the partition of Communal lands.

Such was the outcome of two years of the undisturbed rule of a Social Democratic Government.

THE REIGN OF 'REASON'

Yet one more achievement of the Jacobin Commune must be recorded, for, as our historian tells us, it is its greatest title to fame.

The work for which the Commune is most famous is the establishment of a new cultus—the worship of Reason.

Briefly, this substitute for Christianity consisted in procuring the services of an actress, rouged, decked in an elaborate costume and a Republican cap, and installing her as the 'Goddess of Reason.' The goddess was borne into the Convention by the leaders of the Socialist party, escorted by a number of their supporters, dressed in grotesque costumes and dancing the 'Carmagnole,' and most of them

disgustingly drunk. The representatives of the people rose to the occasion ; they each of them in turn bestowed a kiss upon their new divinity. The goddess was then borne off to the Cathedral of Notre Dame,

where the new worship was inaugurated amid music, tricolor, and virgins dressed in white. . . . Commissions soon established the new worship throughout the length and breadth of French territory, from Antwerp in the north to Marseilles in the south.

Presumably each locality found its own goddess.

We can afford to laugh at these grotesque antics and at this silly and offensive travesty, the actors in which have all been long dead and gone. But the comment of the modern Social Democratic historian contained in a book now being circulated throughout London by the Social Democratic Federation is not laughable, and is not wholly unimportant.

'The Goddess of Reason was never intended to be more than a symbol, and not, as has been sometimes represented' (by our author among others), 'herself an object of worship. Viewed in its true light, the idea, if somewhat pedantic, was not unpleasing.'

Tastes differ.

THE ARMY UNDER S.D.F. PRINCIPLES

It is sometimes suggested that if they accomplished nothing else, the Jacobins at least created a victorious army. This is a pure delusion which

has been fostered by many ignorant and by some interested persons. Whatever the Socialists of the Revolution touched they defiled, and the French Army was no exception to the rule. The cannonade of Valmy, in which some two hundred men lost their lives, was exalted as a Revolutionary victory. It was in fact little more than a skirmish in which the chief part was taken by the remains of the Regular Troops. The campaign of 1792 produced no result save the exasperation of a nominally friendly population by the brutalities of the Revolutionary soldiers. Routed at Helvetsluis by Coburg, the Republicans were again defeated, with a loss of 5,000 men, at Neerwinden. The 'Volunteers and the National Guard,' we are told,¹

were the troops that failed in the battle; after which the men broke up and fled away by whole battalions. Dumouriez was fain to form a rampart of his artillery and his few line battalions.

Bad as matters were, the Jacobin Government soon made them worse. The Army was delivered over to the Socialists, and they at once set to work to apply to it their theories of military government.

A camp was ordered to be formed at Peronne, and in it were assembled, not with disgrace, but with honour, all the soldiers who had been imprisoned by Dumouriez for misconduct; all the deserters, the cowards, and the skulkers who had fled from the army of Belgium.¹

¹ Fortescue, *History of the British Army*.

Jacobin Commissioners accompanied the generals. Informers were encouraged, and every officer was in danger of being denounced to the Revolutionary tribunal by his own men. Discipline was banished ; it was decreed that officers should be elected by their battalions, and that all offences should be tried by juries of the soldiers. The results were what might have been expected. The French were defeated at Famars ; Valenciennes was taken ; the army of Italy was utterly routed at Saorgio. 'Nothing, indeed, but failure upon failure in the field could result from the policy of the Jacobins.' Levies were decreed, and the basest pretexts were put forward for the evasion of service. The true Jacobin preferred remaining in Paris, where the Reign of Terror afforded a congenial outlet for his energies ; or joining the 'Infernal Columns' under Turreau, engaged in the task of carrying fire and sword into the French province of La Vendée, to risking his life against a foreign enemy.

Maddened by constant failure, the Jacobins redoubled their attacks upon the soldiers. But, as the impartial historian of the war justly remarks,

a campaign cannot be won solely by decapitation of one's own troops . . . but it was not easy to convince the unspeakable rogues of the Commune of Paris that terror, which had brought them enormous personal profit, was, as a national policy, a failure.

‘RIGHT ABOUT FACE! QUICK MARCH!’

What Socialist theories and Socialist methods could not accomplish was, however, eventually brought about by very different means. At the end of the year 1793 a soldier who was not a terrorist, but was a hard-working man of genius, was almost accidentally introduced into the War Office. Carnot commenced the work of true organisation. Gradually a change came over the Army. The Socialist Commissioners were driven with ignominy from headquarters; the election of officers was abandoned with the full assent of the soldiers themselves. Military considerations began to take the place of those which were purely political. At the siege of Toulon a young colonel of artillery, named Napoleon Bonaparte, won much distinction. Eventually this young colonel came to Paris. He was a soldier, he could give an order and see it obeyed. In October, 1795, General Bonaparte, lately from Toulon, put down the insurrection of ‘Vendémiaire.’ From that day the making of the victorious Republican army of France began. Rivoli, Arcola, and all the triumphs of the Italian campaign followed. The victories were due to the fact that a soldier of genius was in command of an army which had shaken itself free from the fetters which the Socialist Commune had forged for it. The members of that Commune who had not already fallen victims to the internecine strife

which decimated their quarrelsome ranks were already vying with one another in their frantic race to gain the favour of the soldier who had dissipated with a whiff of grapeshot the whole sordid structure which they had raised.

THE SOCIALIST NAVY

Nor was the Socialist Navy more successful than the Socialist Army. Its great and indeed its only performance beyond that of murdering its non-Socialist officers, was to undergo an overwhelming defeat at the hands of Lord Howe at the battle on the First of June. The 74-gun ship 'Vengeur,' a model of which was suspended by order of Barrère, with characteristic effrontery, in the Pantheon, achieved the curious, and probably unique, distinction of striking her flag twice during the same action before her captain, officers, and crew were taken off by the boats of the British Fleet.

THE TREE AND ITS FRUIT

We have now concluded our brief *résumé* of the two years of French history which have been specially selected by the Social Democratic Federation as an illustration of Socialism in action. It is not too much to say that the earlier years of the Revolution have left indelible marks upon the whole of Europe

in general, and upon France in particular ; while the great movement in favour of social equality, inaugurated by the National Assembly, has borne good fruit. France also owes an immense debt to the strong-willed and warlike genius who rose amid the reaction against the Terror, and associates with the name of Bonaparte the best of her laws, her institutions, and her communications ; but she owes nothing that is good to the cruel and bloody reign of the Social Democratic Commune which controlled her destinies during the two years in which *the Commune of Paris was the most powerful executive body in all France.*

CHAPTER XV

SOCIALISM IN ACTION—(*continued*)

The Paris Commune of 1871—A Socialist victory—The Government of 'The People'—Liberty of the Press—The usages of war—The Revolutionary Tribunal—Murder and arson

A SOCIALIST VICTORY

WE now come to the third and last example of Socialism in action : namely, the Paris Commune of 1871. Here, again, it will be well to allow the Socialists themselves to establish the connection between the work in which they are engaged to-day and that which their predecessors accomplished in 1871. Once more, therefore, we propose to quote from the work of a modern Socialist historian, whose history of the Commune is included in the list of publications of the Social Democratic Federation, and is now being circulated by that body to the people of England.¹

'The Commune of Paris,' he tells us, 'is the one event which Socialists throughout the world have agreed with single accord to celebrate. Every 18th of March witnesses thousands of gatherings throughout the civilised world to

¹ *A Short History of the Paris Commune*, by E. Belfort Bax.

commemorate the (alas! only temporary) victory of organised Socialist aspiration over the forces of property and privilege in 1871. . . . The Commune is a landmark as being the first Administration manned by the working classes, having for its more or less conscious aim the reorganisation of social conditions—the transformation of a civilised society into a Socialist society.'

Now that we know exactly how matters stand, now that we have it on the best authority that the Commune was in fact 'a victory of organised Socialist aspiration,' and that it was an event which 'Socialists throughout the world' delight to celebrate, it will be well to give a short account of what the Commune actually was, and what it actually did, so that English men and women who are not Socialists, and, for the matter of that, a great many who think they are, may know what to expect when organised Socialism once more comes by its own.

THE GOVERNMENT OF 'THE PEOPLE'

It was in the spring of 1871, when France, still bleeding and exhausted after a series of terrible defeats, lay at the feet of the Germans. The gates of Paris, closed during the long siege, had been opened after the capitulation, but the Prussians were still within a few miles of the city, and the whole of the north and east of France was occupied by the invaders. This was the moment chosen by the Social Democratic party to proclaim the govern-

ment of the Commune in Paris. The riffraff of Europe flocked in from all quarters to take part in the adventure, and swashbucklers from the ends of the earth were welcomed as allies in the task of inflaming the passions of the people of Paris against their countrymen and in lighting the fires of civil war in the stricken land. On March 18 the Commune was proclaimed in Paris. On May 21 and 22 it was blotted out in blood and flame by the French troops; but during the two months of its existence it had provided a complete object lesson of what Socialism with a free hand and an unlimited command of men and money can accomplish. It is noteworthy and characteristic that the first and most powerful Executive of the Commune, the Central Committee, was a purely self-constituted body, created without any reference whatever to the popular will, and representing nobody but the individuals who composed it; and Socialism, be it remembered, is, above all things, the outcome of the freely expressed will of 'The People.' The Commune, having constituted itself, next sought to obtain an *ex post facto* sanction for its existence. An election was held. In France, perhaps more than in any other European country, the system of official candidatures has been adopted by Governments and denounced by those who posed as popular leaders. The use of force and undue influence to bias elections in favour of the official candidates has often been laid to the charge

of Governments, and has been unsparingly condemned by the same critics. Under these circumstances it is interesting to observe that, in view of the elections, the Commune published complete official lists of all the candidates who it intended should be returned. In order that the *will of the people* might be quite freely expressed, and that at the same time the right candidates should be elected, the National Guard were called out and stationed in the neighbourhood of the polling stations to take care that 'the reactionaries'—that is to say, the persons who did not approve of the Commune—should be kept in order. They were kept in order. None of them dared to go to the poll. The small number of votes actually cast under these encouraging circumstances were found to be in favour of the official candidates. The Socialist Government was now fully established. It soon began to show what the reign of freedom really meant. Even before the formation of the Central Committee, the reign of violence and cruelty had begun, and two French officers, Generals Lecomte and Clément Thomas, who had had the temerity to enter Paris, had been captured by the National Guards and murdered under circumstances of great brutality. The institution of a regular Government soon put these earlier efforts to shame. On March 22 the Socialist troops opened fire in broad daylight upon a procession of peaceable and unarmed citizens

who were on their way to the headquarters of the Commune to make representations in favour of peace and reconciliation. Seven persons were shot dead and many others wounded.

LIBERTY OF THE PRESS

This manifestation of 'Fraternity' was followed by a series of equally characteristic acts. The whole of the independent Press was promptly suppressed; only the official journals sanctioned by the Commune were allowed to exist. The freedom of the Press is evidently not one which is consistent with Socialism. An armed party was sent down to rob the Bank of France, and sixteen million francs were taken from that institution. Owing to the courage of the bank officials, and also, no doubt, owing to the fact that the emissaries of the Commune were unaware of the amount of the plunder which lay under their hands, the bulk of the money in the national bank was saved.

THE USAGES OF WAR

The Socialist Minister of War, an ex-officer of the Army, who had turned traitor to his flag and broken his military oath, made his contribution to the new outburst of fraternity by threatening to murder the bearers of a flag of truce.

'My dear comrade,' said Rossel to a *parlementaire* sent from the French Army to summon the fort of Issy, 'the

first time you permit yourselves to send us such an insolent summons I shall have your flag of truce shot.' ¹

The Socialist eulogist of the Commune certainly seems justified in his commentary upon this dastardly threat.

'This cynical levity,' says he, 'smacked of the Condottiere; certainly to threaten to shoot an innocent soldier . . . was foreign to the great heart of Paris and her civil war.' ¹

It was, at any rate, foreign to the ideas of all honourable and civilised men.

THE REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNAL

The Law of Hostages was passed, decreeing that for every person executed by the French troops three hostages should be taken. A principal member of the Commune undertook to find the hostages. He seized the Archbishop of Paris and various other ecclesiastics and school teachers, who had nothing, and could have nothing, to do with the strife between the two parties. But this was only the beginning. A regular revolutionary tribunal was established, and as usual private informers were encouraged to come forward to denounce any persons who were supposed to be hostile to the Government. As is always the case under such circumstances, the

¹ Lissagaray, *History of the Commune*. The author was a Communard soldier, but did not belong to Rossel's gang.

profession of public zeal was made a cloak for private revenge. Meanwhile, day after day, the Commune sat, occupying its time in the issue of proclamations containing the same fine sentiments and vague generalities as are to be found in the present Socialist literature—in denouncing and persecuting persons who were not considered ‘good citizens’ and in fierce quarrels among its members.

Each member denounced the other in turn as a traitor and a villain, and there seems no reason to doubt that the accusers were generally right. By a stupid act of vandalism, the Vendôme Column was thrown down, churches were broken open, the churchyards were actually rifled, and the remains of the dead cast into the streets with every circumstance of indignity. As usual, the whole power rapidly passed from the so-called ‘representatives of the people’ to the self-elected members of the Committee of Public Safety, and in this body the most violent and the most unscrupulous soon succeeded in getting rid of those who were by comparison moderate and reasonable.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

As the days went on it became evident that the fate of the Commune was sealed, and the more closely the cordon surrounding the city was drawn, the fiercer and more brutal became the acts of the

Government. Preparations were made for winding up the experiment. An edict was issued by the 'Delegate of Public Works' as follows :—

All persons who have in their possession petroleum or other mineral oils must declare the same in the Government Lighting Offices within forty-eight hours.¹

It will be seen that the petroleum and mineral oils were wanted.

On May 21 the French troops began to enter the city at the Point du Jour, and fighting began in the streets. But the Government of 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity' had not come to the end of its resources. On May 25 the priests, who had been confined in the fort of Bicêtre, were dragged from their prison by the commander of one of the Communist battalions, and, to the number of thirty-eight, were shot down by the National Guard. On the 23rd began the work of incendiarism, and during the next few days the principal public buildings of Paris and scores of private houses were drenched with petroleum and set on fire, the Socialists making the most strenuous efforts to interfere with any attempt to extinguish the flames.

MURDER AND ARSON

On May 26 the Archbishop of Paris and the rest of the unfortunate hostages were butchered.

¹ *La Commune de Paris*, de Vassy-Beaumont. Paris, Garnier Frères.

As to the complicity of the Commune in the burning of Paris there can be no doubt, and for the murder of the hostages here is the order actually given with regard to the murder of the Archbishop:—

‘Citizen Raoul Rigault and Citizen Regère are charged with the execution of the decree of the Commune of Paris with regard to the hostages. Paris, 2 Prairial, year 79,’ signed by Delescluze, Billioray, and five other members of the Commune.¹

Another order, dated the 3rd Prairial, signed by Delescluze and Dombrowski, and found on Delescluze, tells us the number of persons who are to

‘set fire to suspected houses and public monuments’ in every arrondissement.¹

The Ministry of War is responsible for the following brief order, dated 4th Prairial:—

To Citizen Lucas. Burn the Offices of Finance and come back here.¹

Many similar orders might be quoted, all showing that the Commune ended as it began—a Government ruling by force and cruelty, pretending to rely upon the popular support, but perfectly conscious of the fact that even in Paris itself it represented but an insignificant minority of the people.

Such was the Government, and such is the example of Socialism in action which the Socialists

¹ *La Commune de Paris*, de Vassy-Beaumont. Paris, Garnier Frères.

of to-day love to commemorate. It is well to remember these things ; it is well to understand that it is the history of this cruel and detestable tyranny which is now being circulated among the people of England by the Social Democratic Federation, and that it is being circulated as a true example of what Socialism is, and as the record of a '*victory of organised Socialist aspiration which every Socialist should agree to celebrate.*'

CHAPTER XVI

THE SOCIALISM OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Subsidiary points of the Socialist programme—General character of the proposals—The price to be paid—Machinery proposals—Old-age pensions—State maintenance of children—Socialism and collective administration—The profits of labour

SUBSIDIARY POINTS OF THE SOCIALIST PROGRAMME

HAVING discussed what we believe to be the dangerous and mischievous aspects of Socialism, we now come to the consideration of that part of the Socialist programme which is not open to any such condemnation, and which not only may be, but ought to be, discussed with sympathy and with the hope of ultimate agreement. We have already intimated that the various Socialist programmes contain a number of subsidiary recommendations dealing with what we have called 'the Socialism of everyday life'; in other words, with the problems which arise in connection with the extension of State and municipal enterprise. In this category are to be found proposals dealing with such varied subjects as the following:—The payment of members; the

payment of the cost of elections ; adult suffrage ; proportional representation ; triennial parliaments ; second ballot ; initiative and referendum ; raising of the age of school attendance ; the unification of intermediate and higher education, both general and technical ; the State maintenance of children attending State schools ; the transfer of the cost of education to the national exchequer ; the nationalisation of the land, of trusts, railways, gas, electric light, water supplies, &c. ; the establishment of State banks ; public ownership and control of the drink traffic ; a statutory eight hours' day ; the construction of healthy dwellings to be let at a rent which does not include the cost of the land ; and last, but not least, a system of free State insurance against sickness and accident, and free and adequate State pensions for aged and disabled workers.¹

It will be seen at once that these proposals vary greatly in importance, some being comparatively minor matters, while others involve a very wide extension of the accepted views with regard to State and municipal enterprise. It will also, doubtless, be observed that nearly all the subjects referred to have already engaged public attention in this and other countries, have been carefully studied by men and women who have no connection or sympathy with the existing Socialist parties, and have in many instances been already dealt with by various national

¹ See Programme of the S.D.F.

legislatures. It should therefore be possible to discuss the questions raised without prejudice, and to take into counsel men of all opinions and all parties. It is true that the Socialist leaders, by their arrogant tone and by their persistent refusal to recognise that any members of the community outside their own fold can be sincere, or even competent, make such co-operation difficult. But though difficult it ought not to be impossible. It is, of course, necessary for the leaders to adopt a 'pose,' and to represent themselves as being the only genuine saviours of society. But thousands of their followers, whose sole ambition is to see a change for the better, and who are under no necessity whatever to pose, may be relied upon as valuable and reasonable allies. It is greatly to be feared that from the extremists no aid can be expected: they are compelled by the law of their being to produce a continuous output of crude, extravagant, and ill-considered proposals, to say bitter and untrue things of their countrymen, and to impress upon their supporters the belief that they alone possess the key to our intricate social problems.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PROPOSALS

It would, of course, be idle to attempt to discuss the pros and cons of all the proposals above referred to within the limits of this volume, but there are certain general observations which apply to all of

them, and which may possibly prove suggestive and useful to those who are not in the habit of applying general principles to particular instances. In the first place, it must be frankly admitted that none of the proposals which have been mentioned are inherently impossible. That which is proposed might be accomplished if the nation so desired. That having been accomplished, it would work out as its authors hope is by no means equally certain. It is a peculiarity of Acts of Parliament that in nine cases out of ten they produce no result, or produce a result totally different from that which was intended by their framers.

THE PRICE TO BE PAID

In the second place it is just to say with regard to many of the proposed changes that, provided they were made by moderate and fair-minded men, whose desire was to remove abuses and not to punish classes or individuals, they might be adopted without violating the rules of justice and honesty. It will be seen, therefore, that these proposals occupy a very different category from that in which we were compelled to place those items of the Socialist programme which have been dealt with in earlier chapters. But having made these admissions it is necessary to add a caution. The adoption of these proposals must inevitably involve the sacrifice of much which the people of this

country have hitherto regarded as of great value, and the preservation of which they have considered to be essential to the welfare of the State, the preservation of family ties, and the happiness and good conduct of individual citizens. It may be that the people of England are ready to sacrifice the old in order to obtain the new; it may be that they are so enamoured of the gifts that are offered them that they will readily abandon possessions they have long treasured in order to obtain them. The Socialists tell us the people of England are ready to make these sacrifices. They may be right—of that there can be no certainty at present. But one thing is certain, 'here and now,' we cannot have both the old and the new. If the new be good, the old is bad, and the new cannot enter in until the old has been cast out.

There is some reason to doubt whether all those who are attracted by the novel proposals we have enumerated have clearly perceived this. It is possible that when they do perceive it their views may be modified to some extent.

Let us examine two or three of the most important of these proposals with a view to ascertaining what they really involve, and whether the good to be gained is in all cases wholly commensurate with the good which is to be lost.

MACHINERY PROPOSALS

What may be called the 'machinery proposals' of the Socialists may safely be passed over as of no real importance. No human being in his heart supposes that if all the suggested tinkering with our political machinery which is suggested were accomplished to-morrow the people of this country would be one whit happier, wiser, or better off the day after. The abolition of the House of Lords, the payment of members of Parliament and of all administrative bodies, adult suffrage, triennial parliaments, second ballot, and all the rest of it are matters which are quite out of place in a discussion which deals with the real welfare of the people. They are not live issues which touch, or ever will touch, the welfare of human beings. Ruskin was justly contemptuous of the value of a telegraph wire as a means of adding to human happiness so long as the speakers at either end had nothing more to say than their predecessors. Parliament, which makes so many foolish and useless laws during its term of six years, will make just as many and just as foolish laws in two terms of three years each. The 'Voice of the People,' as expressed by some seven million adults, will not speak with any more wisdom or advantage because another two or three million adults join in the chorus. It is just conceivable that Proportional Representation and the

Referendum are items which might be placed on a special footing, for their introduction would involve something more important than a mere multiplication of elections and an addition to the horde of paid officials. But both proportional representation and the referendum have long been discussed, quite apart from Socialism, and there seems no reason to believe that public opinion is as yet ripe for the adoption of either of them.

Putting aside, therefore, the purely political items, we come to the much more important proposals which deal with social and economic problems. Such are State insurance and old-age pensions, State maintenance of children in schools, the nationalisation of railways, and the other matters which have been already referred to.

INSURANCE AND OLD-AGE PENSIONS

By far the most important and far-reaching of the proposals is that for *State insurance and Old-age Pensions*. It is probable that there are still rigid economists of the Manchester School who set their faces against any scheme of insurance or pension. But those who hold this view are not destined to prevail. No fine writing, no sensational expressions, are necessary to describe the evils against which these measures are intended to provide. The curse of numbers lies heavy upon the people of this country. In war there is no cause of suffering more poignant

than the obliteration of individuality. Men become items—their sufferings, their death, are matters of average, things which must be accepted in order to produce the desired result. The condition of very many English men and women is much the same as that of the soldier in war. If once they fall out of the ranks for a moment the advancing host will trample on them, or, what is still worse, will leave them to die forgotten and untended. It is true that millions of men and women live in the knowledge that an accident, a change in the fashion, or even a new invention may leave them absolutely crippled in the battle of life. It is not true to say that under existing conditions all men can by their unaided thrift and self-denial protect themselves from this fate. Still less is it true that those who have reason to dread it are confined to the wage-earning class alone. Poor professional men, clerks, men and women in an infinite variety of employments, are exposed to the danger. Let those who have not experienced the terror use their imagination and endeavour to picture to themselves what this uncertainty means, and what is the condition of those on whom the blow falls. If they succeed in doing so they cannot fail to admit that, if this blight can be removed from our national life, no effort can be too great to secure such a result.

Can it be secured? The answer is that it can. Not wholly—perfect remedies are not of this world—

but to a great extent. How can the thing be done? It can be done, as some would do it, by granting aid as a matter of right to all old and all injured persons without any contribution on their part. It can also be done on a contributory basis. Which plan should be chosen? There may be legitimate differences of opinion, but if the former plan be preferred it will be well to understand exactly what it entails. It means that thrift, self-denial, unselfishness, and many other qualities which we have hitherto professed to regard as desirable in the individual, and of advantage to the State, will receive a heavy blow. Some leading Socialists declare that thrift and saving are ignoble vices; that is because they do not understand the true reason why men value these qualities. It is not the actual saving of money that has any virtue, it is the motive for which men save, the self-restraint they exercise in saving, the love and hope which go with their efforts, which are good and admirable. But be that as it may, non-contributory insurance and non-contributory pensions will most assuredly not only tend to destroy thrift, but will, as they always have done, encourage and promote idleness and poverty.

If this be true—and there is ample warrant for the statement—it would seem that, while there is reason for the demand for insurance and old-age pensions, there are very strong reasons for not adopting the particular method of obtaining them which the Socialists favour.

THE STATE MAINTENANCE OF CHILDREN

Much the same may be said with regard to the question of *State maintenance of children in schools*. The object of those who advocate this policy is twofold. In the first place, it is believed that, by making education in all its branches free, the nation will gain, because the whole population will become more enlightened, and because, as is alleged, the equality of social conditions, which is considered desirable, will be rendered possible when the level of education and intelligence of all classes is uniform. In the second place, it is held by those who advocate the change that the State maintenance of all children will tend to raise the physical condition of the people and to arrest the growing degeneration of the national stock. Who can deny that these are most laudable objects? The arrest of the physical decay of our people is more especially an end for which every one ought to strive, and for the attainment of which scarcely any sacrifice can be too great. The question, therefore, we have to ask is, not whether the objects are in themselves desirable, but whether they will, in fact, be attained by the methods recommended, and whether those methods in themselves are free from objection. These questions will not be solved by declamation. They are exceedingly difficult and complicated. At present there is no evidence that the proposed changes are desired by

the majority of the people of this country ; that if adopted they will produce the desired result, or that they can be adopted without doing more harm than good. One thing is certain : those who believe in parental responsibility, and who desire that good parents should be encouraged and bad parents should be compelled to take thought for their children, cannot reasonably support the proposals. The same may be said of those who are not prepared to see the nation victualled at the public expense like a ship's crew ; for it is obvious that if the whole of the population, up to the age of eighteen, is ' maintained,' *i.e.* fed, clothed, and taught, at the public expense, there is no valid reason why the practice should not be extended to all men and women. It is noticeable that two such great communities as the people of Scotland and the people of London do not at present favour the principle of gratuitous State feeding, even in the modest form of free meals to all school children. Like all the other problems which have been referred to in this chapter, the question of free maintenance of young persons should be discussed strictly upon its merits.¹

¹ The system in operation in Paris under which the machinery of the Municipality is used with great consideration and tact for the distribution of voluntary contributions has much to commend it, and deserves careful study. It has been stated recently by various Socialist authorities that the school children of Paris are fed by the Municipality. This is not the case.

SOCIALISM AND COLLECTIVE ADMINISTRATION

[It is most important to remember that, although the subjects dealt with in this and the following chapter have been included under the general term 'Socialism,' there is, in fact, a vital distinction between them and the Socialism which has been discussed in preceding chapters. In speaking of the Army, the Navy, the Post Office, and of large municipal undertakings as Socialistic in their character, it must be remembered that not only are these important public services organised on a principle which is not Socialistic at all, but that the introduction of the true Socialist principle into any one of them would bring it to ruin in a week. The Navy and the Post Office are recruited by open competition, and in both promotion is by merit. In both there is a carefully constructed and jealously preserved series of orders and degrees, and the emoluments of all persons employed are dependent upon rank, length of service, and capacity. Competition, the reward of merit, the differentiation of reward, are all things repugnant to the Socialist idea. It is a mistake, therefore, to regard a great business as an example of Socialism merely because it is carried on by public servants on behalf of the community. Those who cite the excellent organisation of the Navy, the comparative success of the Post Office, and the occasional absence of failure in municipal enterprises as examples of successful Socialism should be asked if they propose that Socialist principles should be applied to the conduct of these services; and if so, how long they think they are likely to survive the experiment. There is much confusion of thought with regard to this matter, due almost entirely to carelessness in the use of words.]

THE PROFITS OF LABOUR

One other important point remains to be noticed. It is contended by Socialists that the profits of labour should go wholly to labour, and there is not the slightest reason why their aspirations should not be gratified. There is nothing to prevent the establishment of any number of co-operative enterprises conducted by, and for the sole benefit of, those who do the actual work. There need be no difficulty about capital—many millions are already employed in co-operative distribution. It may be asked, Why, then, has this simple and obvious experiment never been tried? The answer is that it has been tried many times; and that most unfortunately the experiments that have been made have, with very rare exceptions, failed. The lesson to be learnt from a study of the many failures and the few successes is

most instructive. It does not encourage the idea that the Socialist panacea is of any particular value when applied on a small scale, and it furnishes no reason whatever for the belief that if applied on a large scale by State officials it would prove more efficacious. One thing, however, does become quite clear: namely, that there is not the slightest reason why those who believe in the profits of labour going wholly to those who are at present wage-earners only should not test the value of their faith by experiment. At the same time they will have the equally valuable opportunity of testing the principle of an equal division of losses among the workers.]

CHAPTER XVII

THE SOCIALISM OF EVERYDAY LIFE—(*continued*)

The nationalisation of railways—State servants and their votes—
The minimum wage—Municipal dwellings—The public control
of the drink traffic—The eight hours' day

THE NATIONALISATION OF RAILWAYS

THIS is a subject about which there is much misapprehension. It appears to be supposed by some persons, and particularly by Socialist writers, that there is some magic in the idea ; that railways in the hands of a Government Department will be totally different from railways under private management ; and that the change will be wonderfully beneficial. This is a mere dream. The nationalisation of railways has long ago passed from the realm of theory into that of accomplishment. There are many State railway systems in the world, some of them good, some indifferent, and some extraordinarily bad. But, whether the systems are good, bad, or indifferent, the fact that they are State-controlled has made no sensible contribution to the wealth, happiness, or prosperity of the countries affected. As far as the

individual passenger is concerned, there is practically no difference at all. On the Continent many railways are State-owned, many are not. Ninety-nine travellers out of a hundred are quite unaware whether the railway on which they travel is managed by the Government or by a company. Fares on State railways may be lower than on a privately owned line; they may be, and often are, higher. Neither system has an advantage in speed, though it is probably true to say that the average speed on privately owned lines is far higher than on State lines. If the latter sometimes have an advantage in the matter of freight rates, the fact is due not so much to State ownership as to other causes. In some cases it is true that low rates, especially low through rates, are given as a matter of public policy to exporters. Such is the practice in Germany. But subsidies—and rates which do not cover cost can only be maintained by subsidies—need not be confined to State railways. It is probable, moreover, that in this country the chief factor in keeping up rates is the immense amount of State interference with the work of the companies. It is not probable that there would be less interference if the State owned the concern instead of regulating it. In India the State rates are higher than our home rates, and it is remarkable that in Belgium the working cost of the State railways is practically identical with that of British lines.

But when all this has been said, it must be admitted that there is no overwhelming objection in principle to the State ownership of railways. In some cases the service might be better than it is now, in other cases it might be much worse. But it is not necessary to confine ourselves to pure speculation; there is a vast amount of material ready to the hand of those who desire to study the problem. It is not always very lively reading, but it is much more relevant to the issue than the vague generalities of the Socialist programme.

The idea that any great income would be derived from the working of the railways by the State may be dismissed. Setting aside the extreme Socialist view that the State should acquire the railways by stealing them from the present shareholders, we find ourselves confronted with the problem of purchase. The State can, of course, purchase the railways. It may conceivably work them so successfully that, after paying the interest on the purchase money, it will receive a surplus. But the omens are not very favourable. It has been stated on good authority that the falling-in to the Government of the French lines has already been so fully discounted that no serious addition to the net revenue of the Republic is to be expected when the event takes place. In Germany loans are being raised for railway expenses. In Australia and New Zealand the railways are run at a loss, or with an insignificant and doubtful margin

of profit. It must be admitted, however, that in the last two cases it is alleged that profit is not an object. After examining all the evidence pro and con Parliament may come to the conclusion that the railways in this country can be worked at a profit by the State, and it is even conceivable that Parliament might turn out to be right. Such profit, when obtained, might be utilised either in the relief of taxation or for the purpose of lowering passenger fares and goods freights. But it must be remembered that the tendency will be to raise all salaries and wages, and it is doubtful whether any Government will be strong enough to resist the pressure which will be put upon it to compel it to sanction such an increase.

A PUBLIC DANGER

And here we come to a very important question which arises in connection not only with the State purchase of railways, but with respect to all plans for the extension of State and municipal enterprise. The creation of enormous numbers of Civil Servants, all capable of exercising the franchise to further their own pecuniary interests, cannot fail to be most detrimental to the nation. The danger is not an imaginary one. Already we have seen the evil in the case of School Board elections and in connection with the General Post Office. In other countries the evil has now become most formidable. In Victoria

the community, alarmed by the claim of the railway employees to govern the State and to bleed the public for their own advantage, sought to protect itself by the passage of a law by which definite representation was conferred upon the Civil Servants and railway employees who were debarred from exercising their votes outside the limits of the special franchise. The plan had much to commend it ; it was both just and reasonable. But the Act was repealed in 1906 ; whether because it was considered no longer necessary, or because it came too late, and the power of the State employees has already become too formidable to brook any control, is not quite apparent.

Those who desire to see to what an extent the evil has grown in France should read the remarkable speeches in which M. Clémenceau, a Radical of the Radicals, defended his refusal to allow the State servants to become members of the *Confédération du Travail*. A more lucid and convincing exposure of the dangers of the situation, and a better defence of the policy of providing against them, cannot be found.

In Italy the pretensions of the railway employees have led them to inflict upon the public which employs them the immeasurable hardship and inconvenience of a general strike.¹ So gross was the attack on public liberty that the action of the Govern-

¹ In the autumn of 1907.

ment in using troops to quell the strike was thoroughly endorsed by public opinion, and the strikers dared not face the just indignation they had provoked. That a similar danger will arise in this country if we nationalise or municipalise our institutions on a large scale, and without due precaution, is certain.

It would seem, therefore, that the advisability of nationalising the railways must be greatly affected by the decision we arrive at with regard to restraining the voting power of the employees. That the unrestrained exercise of that power must be bad for the community is obvious, and if only the case were stated apart from matters of prejudice would be universally admitted. No sensible man would consent to the proposition that out of a hundred hard-working citizens ten should be empowered by law to lay the remaining ninety under tribute without remedy and without appeal. Yet this is exactly the position which is created by the exercise of a solid minority vote by the Government employees in any constituency. In nine cases out of ten the members of the minority will be able to control the balance vote, and thereby to exclude any person who does not pledge himself to their demands. It is the tendency of the members of every such minority to put their own personal pecuniary interests in the forefront ; the consequence is that they are able to compel their neighbours to sacrifice their own earnings in order to pay whatever may be demanded by men

who are neither more hard-working nor meritorious than themselves, but who have been placed in a position in which they can tax the community at will.

In a word, the nationalisation of railways is a policy which should be accepted, if at all, solely upon its merits. Before we decide whether it has any merits we should study very carefully all the facts which are available for our guidance. At the best it may prove to be a convenience; at the worst it may turn out to be a costly incubus. Under no circumstances can it prove to be what the Socialists tell us it will be—a remedy for our ills, or for any part of them.

THE MINIMUM WAGE

Again, with regard to the proposals for a *minimum* wage, much the same thing may be said. It is a fact, which nobody can deny, that the system of unrestricted competition has resulted in many workers in this country being compelled to accept wages which are painfully inadequate to support life. Who does not wish to see this state of things altered? But who is there who really believes that by going back to the follies of the French Revolution, and decreeing by Act of Parliament a universal minimum wage, we shall make matters any better than they are now? But can the rate of wages be raised? Yes, it can. Already the Trade Unions, whose work

in this direction has been admirable, have taught us that much. They have put their foot down heavily upon free competition as the universal rule of life. If they are in fault, it is because they have gone almost too far in their rigid system of protection. They have limited apprenticeship ; they have driven thousands of workers out of the skilled trades ; they have imposed every kind of artificial restriction upon men and workers ; and they have made it their sole object to force up wages. The lesson to be learnt is, not that we should imitate the precise practice of the Trade Unions, but that we should learn from them the truth that cheapness is not everything, and that the comfort and independence of the human being are much more important than strict adherence to the principle of *laissez faire*. Wages will not be raised by Act of Parliament, but it is most desirable that they should be raised, and there are methods by which they can be raised. Of one of those methods we propose to speak in a later chapter.

MUNICIPAL DWELLINGS

The proposal to tax one portion of the population in order to provide suitable housing accommodation for another portion is not new either in theory or in practice. There is great and admitted need for an improvement in the houses in which many of our countrymen live. The question is what is the best

manner of effecting that improvement. Hitherto improved houses have been provided principally by private enterprise and partly by municipal enterprise. It is now suggested that the second plan should be adopted to the exclusion of the first ; but it is by no means certain that, quite apart from other objections, such a policy would achieve the desired results. Hitherto the general effect of municipal enterprise has been to put a check on private enterprise, and it is probably no exaggeration to say that every municipal building that is erected puts a stop to the erection of five or six similar or better buildings which would have been erected by private enterprise. In a few cases municipal buildings have proved a success ; in the majority of cases they have proved a failure ; and the lamentable condition of the London County Council tenement houses, which are sparsely inhabited by persons for whom they were not intended, stands as a warning rather than as an encouragement. Municipal building will never solve the housing problem, but may, if undertaken with great care, tend in some cases to alleviate it.

THE PUBLIC CONTROL OF THE DRINK TRAFFIC

The carrying-on of the drink traffic by the community is a plan which has long been recommended by many who are not Socialists. Mr. Chamberlain and Dr. Jayne, Bishop of Chester, among others,

have urged that a trial should be given to what is known as the 'Gothenburg system.' There is much to be said in favour of such a trial, but it must not be supposed that any magical result will flow from a reform of this kind. The plan has often been tried ; it has sometimes met with a limited measure of success, but it has often proved a failure ; and many persons who feel very strongly with regard to the drink question are opposed to it. The plan has nothing to do with Socialism, and should be dealt with solely on its merits.

THE EIGHT HOURS' DAY

The adoption of a universal eight hours' day is a consummation devoutly to be wished. It will never be fully attained, but we have been approximating towards it for a good deal more than half a century, and for the most part the progress has been quite independent of statute, and has been achieved without any aid whatever from the Socialists. Everything that tends towards increasing leisure, and at the same time giving to those who obtain that leisure the means of utilising and enjoying it, is good. But one thing must be clearly borne in mind : it is idle to forbid men to work for more than eight hours in this country and then to expose them to the competition of other countries in which no such limitations are imposed upon the workers. This truth will

before long impress itself very clearly upon the people of this country.

We have been compelled to deal very briefly with what may be called the controversial but unobjectionable portions of the Socialist programme. It will be seen that not one of them is in any sense either the property or the invention of the Socialist party. It will be seen also that they all involve problems of great complexity which have exercised and are exercising many minds. These problems will not be solved by declamation, but by steady, painstaking inquiry. Some may be willing in order to 'do a great right' to 'do a little wrong'; but even that doubtful precept is of no avail in cases where the certainty of doing great mischief can only be compensated for by the achievement of a small and doubtful gain. We therefore venture to commend to our readers the wisdom of examining all these minor proposals without any prejudice; of working where they can with those of their fellow-countrymen who are Socialists, but not working with them because they are Socialists, for Socialism itself has nothing to teach us with respect to them.

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS

The limits imposed—National ideas and the Empire—Levelling up emigration—The wages problem and tariff reform

THE LIMITS IMPOSED

IT would be impossible to close a review of Socialism such as the present without some reference, however brief, to the subject of an alternative policy to that which is proposed by Socialists. The object of the preceding chapters has been frankly critical; it has been the aim of the writer to show that for the evils which exist in our body politic Socialism can never supply a remedy. But he has wholly failed in his purpose if he has not also made it clear that, in his opinion, those evils are great and urgently call for a remedy; and also that the remedy is not to be found in a strict adherence to existing methods and accepted ideas. There is need for action. It is not enough to reprobate those who propose to act in a way of which we do not approve. It is necessary to show that there is a better way. It would be idle to pretend that such a task is an easy one, or that any individual

can bring towards its accomplishment more than a very small contribution in the way of suggestion. A responsible Government, acting in accordance with an enlightened and powerful public opinion, is the principal, if not the only, instrument by which great changes can be effected. Moreover, it must be clearly understood that those who do not believe in the Socialist policy do not themselves pretend to provide a panacea. It is, indeed, part of their case that human nature, in its essentials, does not greatly change throughout the ages, and that Acts of Parliament or administrative decrees are quite powerless to alter it. There always have been, there are, and there always will be, inequalities in human society which no law will remove or greatly modify. There always has been, there is, and there always will be, suffering which no system of government will alleviate. The man who pretends that he will cure these evils is a quack who will eventually be found out. But many quacks have prospered exceedingly before they were found out, and this is a fact which must be taken into account. It is far easier to promise a new heaven and a new earth than to make one corner of the earth a little better than it is. It is evident, therefore, that, while fine aspirations, some well-sustained hatreds, and some general professions of sympathy are all the equipment that is required by those who are believers in the virtue of the 'Panacea,' something much more definite and

much more difficult is required of those who take the less ambitious view of the possibilities of human progress. They must see things as they are ; they must take human nature into account ; they must study history and try to understand its teaching ; and, above all, they must be courageous enough to believe and to say that persecution and injustice can never prove of real benefit to an individual, to a class, or to a community.

NATIONAL IDEALS AND THE EMPIRE

With these preliminary remarks we pass to a consideration of some of those proposals which seem worthy of consideration as likely, if adopted, to produce an improvement in the social economy of this country, and to diminish, if not to remove, some of the evils the existence of which has been recognised.

We venture to believe that the first place should be given to those points of policy which affect the nation's ideals. It is the principal, if not the only, merit of the Socialist teaching that it professes to be actuated by a spiritual motive and to depend for its accomplishment upon the acceptance of an ideal. That in its practical working, as explained by its accredited teachers, Socialism involves much that is cruel and selfish, much that is impracticable, and much that is mischievous should not blind us to

this fact. 'Man cannot live by bread alone' is true now as always, and the policy that has no ideals will never vivify or help a people. The whole history of the world tells us that this is true. Can we find under our modern conditions the soil in which a great ideal can grow? Undoubtedly we can. The filling-up, the consolidation, the wise direction of the great Empire to which we belong furnish a field of work such as has never been granted to any other people since the world began. The possibilities which await success are scarcely greater than the calamities and the disgrace which must be the outcome of failure. It is absolutely true to say that at the present moment there are many people in this country upon whom life bears so hardly that they have neither the power to understand nor the spirit to cherish any ideals. For them the constant round of daily sorrow and daily effort is absorbing and crushing. But that is no reason whatever why we should accept the dismal doctrine that, because some of our countrymen are not yet able to share our privileges, we should level down to their misfortune and should abandon all that we believe in, and rightly believe in. The true policy is to have the courage of our opinions, to declare that those things in which we believe are good and true, and to do all in our power so to improve the circumstances of those who cannot now sympathise with us that they may come to be numbered among the

most active and convinced propagandists of our faith. We believe, therefore, that every movement which tends to unify the Empire and to make its immense possibilities known to all who live in it is good, and that the contrary teaching and the contrary policy are bad, are inspired by no ideal, but by a barren pessimism which can only lead to disaster. The idea here inadequately expressed is conveyed in the moving and convincing words of Lord Curzon:—

‘No other policy,’ says the ex-Viceroy of India, ‘no other creed than Imperialism can successfully solve our problems. Insular Radicalism cannot solve them; Cosmopolitanism cannot, Socialism cannot. To Imperialism alone can we look to satisfy the needs and to hold together the framework of the British Dominion. But if Imperialism is to play this part, let us be sure that it is animated by the supreme idea without which it is only as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal—namely, the sense of sacrifice and the idea of duty. Empire can only be achieved with satisfaction or maintained with advantage provided it has a moral basis. To the people of the Mother State it must be a discipline, an inspiration, and a faith.’

What is true of the great ideal of Imperial unity is true of many other hopes and aspirations. We must have the courage of our opinions. It is good that men and women should be thrifty and independent. It is good that freedom should be the rule of our lives, and State control the exception. It is good that there should be an incentive to individual action, and that monotony and uniformity should

be banished from our lives, instead of being imposed by the heavy hand of the State. It is, nevertheless, true that to speak of these things and of many others which those who have education and the means which give leisure and independence know and feel to be good, to the helpless, the wretched and the uninformed, is like describing a landscape to a blind man. What, then, is the conclusion at which we should arrive? What is the policy which such reflections seem to dictate? Not the policy of despair, still less the policy of denying our own faith; but rather the policy of levelling up, and of giving to all the people of this country the opportunities which are now enjoyed only by some of them. The ideal will never be wholly realised, but it is an ideal towards which we can approximate.

It is because we believe that a nation which is not consciously working in accordance with a great ideal is a nation without force or value in the world that we have placed the question of Imperial Unity in the forefront.

EMIGRATION

Closely akin to the question of Imperial Unity is that of the rational treatment of emigration. Within the broad limits of the British Empire there are vast areas in which skill, labour, and energy are urgently required. Within the narrow limits of the United Kingdom there is an abundance of skill, labour, and

energy, but the scope for their exercise diminishes day by day. A real emigration policy, undertaken in open accord with the self-governing States of the Empire, is greatly needed. Before we decide to spend time and effort in inventing work, and creating a sham demand in the United Kingdom, is it not better to exert ourselves in order to supply workers where they are really needed? It is true that many emigrants leave our shores now, some of them with sore hearts and with little good will to the country which they abandon. But if the essential unity of the Empire were once properly understood, these leave-takings might be shorn of nearly all their bitterness, and those who depart might be made to feel that in very truth they were only moving from one part of their own country to another. But to make any such policy effective our statesmen must possess and exercise the high quality of imagination. They must look forward and must understand that the future of our race is not, and cannot be wholly, or even mainly, in these islands. The time must come when this little kingdom, set almost on the edge of the Arctic circle, with its 121,000 square miles of land, must become an appanage, a glorious and treasured appanage, of the great countries across the sea. A map will help us to understand the nature of the problem. The area of Canada is 3,750,000, of Australia 3,200,000, of British East Africa 750,000, of British South Africa 1,238,000 square miles. The

area of the United Kingdom is but 121,000. Let us then act as if we really believed that in transferring our stock to these growing communities we are doing more for the future of our race than we shall ever accomplish by still further overcrowding the tiny islands on which we live.

WAGES AND FISCAL REFORM

We have already spoken in an earlier chapter of the question of State Insurance and Old-age Pensions, and have expressed the opinion that it is most desirable in the interests of the community that these great benefits should be secured for the people. But we have given reasons for our belief that it is also in the highest interests of the nation that these benefits should be conferred, not in the form of poor relief, but should rest in part, at any rate, on a contributory basis. But of even greater importance than the question of Insurance and Old-age Pensions is the question of wages. The former concerns the maimed, the infirm, and the aged ; the latter is a vital issue for the active, the industrious, and the hard-working. Good wages are a condition precedent to the establishment of any system of Old-age Pensions. Men must earn before they save, and the proposition is equally true whether the saving is made by individuals or by the State. At the risk of incurring the censure of some of our readers, we

must express the opinion, an opinion which grows in strength with every day's study of the wage problem, that by far the most certain and effective method of securing adequate and constant wages for able-bodied and willing workers is to introduce a reasonable scheme of Fiscal Reform. It would be useless, and, indeed, impossible, to attempt within the limits of this book to set forth the considerations upon which this conclusion is based. It must suffice to put on record our belief that the system of free imports is doomed by its inherent injustice and absurdity; and that the inevitable diminution of the trade activity which has marked the last three years will lead not merely to the acceptance of Fiscal Reform by the wage-earning population of this country, but to its compulsory adoption at their instance.

CHAPTER XIX

SOME CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS—(*continued*)

The land—Land transfer—Security—Communications and power distribution—Afforestation and road-making—The mercantile marine

THE LAND

NO programme of change, by whatever party it is put forward, is now considered complete without some reference to the *Land Question*. In the Socialist programme it occupies a foremost place, and all sorts of wonderful consequences are expected to follow the transfer of the land of this country from its present owners to a Socialist Government. Nor can it be denied that in many programmes, far less ambitious and far less objectionable than that of the Socialists, the land is treated as if it possessed some magic qualities not to be found in any other commodity. It is true that land, owing to its being immovable and limited, does possess some special attributes. But it is not at all true that for that reason its possession, transfer, and occupation are not to a very large extent governed by the same laws which prevail in respect to all other commodities.

There are undoubtedly strong reasons for desiring a change in the distribution of the ownership and occupancy of land. But it is a mistake to suppose that, even if these changes were to be effected, any very wonderful consequences would follow. It is said, and said truly, that the land of England is for the most part in the hands of a few people, and it is contended that it should be in the hands of many people. The Socialists contend that it should be in the hands of all the people; in other words, that there should be State ownership of the land. It is said, and said truly, that the congestion of the population in the great towns, owing to the exodus from the country, is to be deplored, and that it is earnestly to be desired that as many people as possible should be induced or compelled to go back to the country and to stay there. It is said, and said truly, that it is in the highest interests of the nation that the land should be cultivated in such a way as to give the greatest possible return which Nature, stimulated by art, will allow. In so far as all or any of these things can be accomplished, the nation will undoubtedly benefit. But it is well to be moderate in our expectations, both as to what can be accomplished, and as to the advantage likely to ensue if the desired changes are effected. A very little consideration will suffice to show that the methods of dealing with the land which at present find most favour with Parliament are mere 'nostrums,' which can by no possibility cure

the disease. The Augurs must indeed be laughing at each other outright by this time, as one political 'dodge' after another is put forward with perfect gravity and assurance.

What is the problem? The problem is to get people to live on the land who now want to do so and cannot; to ensure that those who do live on the land shall be enabled to make a living out of it; and to enable those who find they cannot make a living out of it to get off it again with as little trouble and as little expense as possible. Such being the problem, it might be thought that some of the main principles of the solution were clearly indicated. The purchase and sale of land should be made cheap and easy; the industry of farming in all its branches should be made profitable and attractive; ownership, which all over the world has been the life of successful agriculture, should be encouraged; security of possession should be guaranteed by contracts openly made by willing parties, and safeguarded by the sure protection of the law. Lastly, the owners and occupiers of land should be encouraged by every possible means to enrich the soil which they cultivate. What are the contributions which recent land legislation and more recent land projects have made towards the fulfilment of these essential conditions? In every part of the United Kingdom contracts have been torn up, agreements made by willing parties with their eyes open have

been set aside, and there is not an owner or occupier of land in the United Kingdom who has not been made to feel that his property and his industry have become the sport of political parties to whom his welfare and interests are a matter of no concern whatever. It is desirable that the transfer of land should be easy and cheap. What do we find? We find that the sale and transfer of land is a process so complicated and costly that the purchase of an acre is a perilous adventure from which no man can be sure of emerging with safety and profit—except the lawyers. So far from any real encouragement being given to agriculture, land is made the subject of special and onerous taxes, which are not the less onerous because they fall on the owner even more heavily than on the occupier. Not only is the business which is thus hampered by every kind of legal absurdity and fiscal disability exposed to the fierce competition of all the world, but its conduct is made difficult by minute, though doubtless necessary, regulations and restrictions, and by a system of transport in many respects inadequate and often costly. If these be the difficulties which induce men to abandon the attempt to live on the land and induce them to come into the towns, what is the obvious way of mending matters? Clearly to remove the main obstacles, and thus to make agriculture both paying and attractive. The idea that it is necessary to pass Acts of Parliament by which

new occupiers may be quartered by force on the country districts is absurd. Still more absurd is it to suppose that the persons thus set down to serve a political purpose will prosper any better than those whom they dispossess. The land of England has come into the hands of a comparatively small number of owners not by accident, but partly by design and partly by the irresistible force of economic conditions. At the time the Enclosure Acts were passed it was believed, and rightly believed, that large holdings were necessary in order to obtain the maximum product from the soil. What was true in the eighteenth century is true now. Small farms may succeed in certain cases, but they will not increase the available agricultural output of this country. Market gardens may do so. But in either case it is only very experienced and competent men who will achieve success.

LAND TRANSFER

There is one way, and one way only, of bringing the right people on to the land and inducing them to stay there—namely, to make it easy for them to come, profitable for them to stay, and easy for them to go. It would seem, therefore, that our efforts should follow the line of least resistance. Land transfer should be made simple and cheap. There is only one reason why it should not be both : that

reason is to be found in our complicated land laws, and our cumbrous system of conveyancing, which has become a vested interest of the lawyers, whose participation in every transaction is, under present conditions, inevitable. That it is difficult to simplify the conditions of title and transfer in an old country is true, but the difficulty is not insuperable. There is no real reason why we should not eventually have a system almost as simple as that created by the Torrens Act in Australia, or that which exists in the city of Hamburg, where two signatures in an official register constitute an effective and complete transfer. A cadastral survey is required, but already the ten-foot-to-the-mile maps of the Ordnance Survey have done all that is required for certain districts.

SECURITY

The rates and taxes on land, and all that appertains to the cultivation of land, should be diminished. The foolish idea that land goes out of cultivation because evilly disposed landlords refuse to part with it, should be dismissed from the minds of rational men and left to street-corner agitators. Landlords who spend thousands of pounds more upon their properties than they obtain from them—and there are many such—would certainly make a profit out of those properties if energy, money, and science could secure it. If the land does not

pay in their hands, it will not, save in rare instances, pay if transferred to other people. Contracts with respect to the land should be strictly observed instead of being made the sport of political parties. Security is the life-blood of all successful enterprise in business. But when all is said and done, no laws will effect any very great change, and the idea that the soil will become much more productive than it is at present, as the result of any legislative interference, need not be taken seriously.

COMMUNICATIONS AND POWER DISTRIBUTION

There is, however, a reason which has nothing whatever to do with the agricultural output, but which makes it desirable that the number of dwellers in the country should be increased. The congestion in the great towns is an evil which cannot be exaggerated. Undoubtedly this evil can be diminished by increasing the amenities and profits of agriculture. It can also be diminished by the improvement of communications and by a proper system of power distribution. Those mournful collections of small houses and large mills and warehouses which we call manufacturing towns are the outcome of conditions which no longer exist. They came into existence because manufacture could only be carried on profitably in the immediate neighbourhood of the sources of power ; in other words

on, or on the fringe of, the coalfields. The transmission of electrical energy has changed all this; a fact we are only just beginning to realise, and of which the consequences may transform the conditions of national life. The transmission of electrical energy for power, traction, and lighting should therefore be encouraged in every way. It will not be encouraged, but will be retarded, if we pursue the policy which has found so much favour of late, and which consists in encouraging public bodies to hunt down, to threaten, and to ruin all private enterprises. Public and private enterprise should exist side by side in friendly co-operation, and not as enemies engaged in a war of extermination.

AFFORESTATION AND ROAD-MAKING

It is a cardinal point of Socialist doctrine that the State should provide work for all who desire employment, and it is fair to add that the view is not confined to members of the Socialist party. We have already expressed the opinion that the true way to provide employment is to increase the extent and add to the emoluments of home industries. This can best be done by methods which involve no State interference. If, however, we are to commit ourselves, even for a time, to the doubtful experiment of inventing work, it is obviously far better that labour thus employed should be devoted to some rational

purpose than to a sort of glorified oakum-picking. There are undoubtedly some great operations which might be undertaken with advantage to the State, and on which the resources of the community might be expended with the certainty that the money would not be absolutely wasted. It is said that in the German Empire there is an acre of forest for every inhabitant, and over 40,000 persons are employed by the Forest Administration. It is difficult to exaggerate the value of this great forestry system to Germany. We can never hope to rival the German forests in extent, but there is no reason why, by an intelligent combination of scientific direction and judicious expenditure, we might not enormously increase the forest area of the United Kingdom. Work might also be profitably expended upon our roads. There are probably only two highways in England which would be admitted into the category of properly engineered roads in any Continental country. A single instance of the speed at which we move in the matter of road-making is worth citing. Fifteen hundred years ago, when the Romans went from Pulborough to Arundel, they climbed the steep ascent to the top of Bury Hill because the sea came up beyond Amberley. The distance was, and is, nine miles. For many hundreds of years the sea has left Amberley, and is now ten miles off at Littlehampton. The river Arun and the Brighton Railway go direct from Pulborough to Arundel on

the level, a distance of eight miles, but the British road authorities have not yet discovered the change which has taken place, and the distance is till nine miles over the top of Bury Hill. Even worse than the condition of our main roads is the confusion of authorities responsible for their management. If any Government would do for the United Kingdom what Bonaparte did for France, we should have reason to be grateful.

THE MERCANTILE MARINE

The transformation of the mercantile marine is a task that may well occupy any Government which desires to improve the conditions of one of the greatest of British industries. Something has already been done to make the life of the seamen and firemen more tolerable than it was, but the discomforts are still far in excess of what they need be even in so hard a calling, and the enormous number of foreigners employed on board our ships is an evil which urgently demands a remedy. It is quite true that foreign seamen are often employed because, as regards character and efficiency, British seamen sometimes leave much to be desired. But to accept such an argument as conclusive is to misunderstand the whole situation. If there is a good business good men will go into it, and far more might be done than is at present done to make

seafaring a good business. The systematic training and regulation of our merchant seamen are matters which might well engage the attention of the Government. There is no country in the world which has such a peculiar, direct, and vital interest in the maintenance of a well-manned mercantile marine as Great Britain. Probably no country spends less intelligence upon improving and encouraging the *personnel* of its mercantile marine than our own.

CHAPTER XX

SOME CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS—(*continued*)

The amenities of life—Class distinctions—An example from the Army—An example from the magistracy—Conclusion

THE AMENITIES OF LIFE

WE have readily admitted that the misery of the very poor furnishes us with a reason for action and for change. But it would be a mistake to suppose that it is only in the condition of the very poor that a change is needed and demanded. The desire for a larger share of the good things of this life is far keener among those who have happily begun to enjoy them than among those who have never known them. This is a fact that, so far from causing any concern, should be a ground for satisfaction. Life need not be dull, and drab, and limited. No legislation, it is true, will alter the power of the individual to rise superior to his surroundings, to find happiness in the spiritual side of life, and interest in all that goes on in the world around him, even though his lot be monotonous and his share of the world's goods small. The soul of man is outside

and above the domain of Governments. To ignore these facts would be to challenge criticism and contradiction and to ignore the existence of many beautiful lives in which contentment and happiness are the outcome of true religion, and are independent of external circumstances. Nevertheless there is a great deal of happiness which does come, and comes only, from the enjoyment of leisure, from bright surroundings, from rational amusements, and from the contemplation and possession of things which are beautiful and interesting. We are woefully behind-hand in this country with respect to all these things. Our Puritanism brought us perhaps some blessings, of which we are not infrequently reminded; but it laid upon us the tremendous curse of dulness and mediocrity, of the inability to enjoy ourselves, of want of taste, of want of toleration; defects which have made our towns hideous, our amusements a byword, and the public amenities of life inferior to those of almost every other country. It is impossible not to sympathise with much that is said on this subject by the Rev. Stewart Headlam in his pamphlet entitled '*Municipal Puritanism.*'¹ Briefly there is no reason why those who like cakes and ale should not have them because some other people do not want them. To those who know the great and beautiful places of public resort in every large

¹ *Municipal Puritanism*, published by the Guild of St. Matthew, and circulated by the S.D.F.

town on the Continent, places where men, women, and children can meet for refreshment, for reasonable recreation, and for social intercourse, it seems a crying shame that we should be compelled to admit that a young woman or a child cannot fitly be allowed to enter the places where half the population at least are in the habit of taking their refreshment. Our great towns are also a disgrace to the nation. Not because no money is spent upon them, but because neither taste nor judgment is allowed to influence their construction and adornment, and because the laws by which clearances are permitted are notoriously inadequate and based on incorrect principles. Things have come to such a pass that heroic treatment is required before our great towns can be redeemed from their squalid mediocrity. In London we are now completing two modest improvements, the construction of Kingsway and the removal of the carriage road from the side to the middle of the Mall, which were declared to be urgent seventy-five years ago.¹ It would pay amply, both from the moral and the material point of view, to drive a score of great avenues through London from east to west and north to south, to plant them and adorn them, and to make them the pride of all Londoners. Those who wish to see what can be done to glorify and beautify a city, and to make it a bright and

¹ These are two of the five improvements declared by Mr. Sydney (afterwards Sir Sydney) Smirke to be *urgent* over seventy years ago.

happy place, not only for the few, but for all who live in it, should visit Zurich, Frankfort, and many other Continental towns. Frankfort, which since 1866 has increased its population from 60,000 to 300,000, furnishes an example which puts to shame all our puny efforts. There is not a class in the community whose welfare has not been considered and whose opportunities for enjoyment, recreation, and instruction have not been increased.

CLASS DISTINCTIONS

We are told that this country is hopelessly divided by class distinctions. That the number of classes is almost infinite is true, and 'pity 'tis, 'tis true.' And be it said that the class divisions go down to the very depths of society. The idea that the whole population can be divided, after the Socialist fashion, into 'sheep' and 'goats,' sheep possessing under 300*l.* a year and goats 301*l.* and upwards, is a fantasy. Class distinctions may be comprised within two categories: there is the legitimate division into classes which necessarily follows the division of occupations. Soldiers, lawyers, clergymen, manual labourers, operatives, and journalists will all necessarily be specially interested in their own particular calling, and will tend to form classes corresponding with their occupations. In any form of society these divisions must inevitably exist. But

there is another form of class distinction which is not inevitable, and which certainly is far from beneficial. This is the distinction which comes from the existence of different planes of intellectual interest. It is a fact, which no one can deny, that in English society as at present constituted the whole intellectual and social outlook of different classes varies so greatly that it may almost be said that each class speaks a language which some other class cannot understand. It is absurd to pretend that one class is better or worse than another. But the fact that there are so few points on which all classes speak the same language, and in respect of which they are moved by the same ideas and interests, is undoubtedly a disadvantage to the nation. The remedy in this, as in almost every other case which we have discussed, is 'to level up'; to make it possible for all members of the community to share the same great interests and ambitions, and to give to the whole community as far as possible the chance of learning the same social language. This may seem an obscure saying, but it is a true one and capable of infinite expansion. Education, especially the increase of popular universities and the recent great growth of secondary schools, of which the full effect has not yet been felt, is doing much. Everything that tends to extend the amenities and pleasures of life to the bulk of the people, to give leisure, to give facilities for social intercourse, to give a share in the performance of

national duties, is a step in the right direction. It is by these means, and these means only, that class distinctions can really be eradicated ; and be it said that the education of the idle rich and the civilisation of what is called 'Society' itself are perhaps as much needed as the extension of civilisation in any other direction. The 'barbarian' element which Matthew Arnold so often depicted for us is still very powerful. But the way to remove class distinctions is emphatically not that which now finds much favour in some quarters. Class distinctions will not be removed either by pretending that they do not exist, or by forcibly introducing members of one class into another.

AN EXAMPLE FROM THE ARMY

A couple of examples will suffice to illustrate this proposition. It is said, and said truly, that the National Army is, to a very large extent, the Army of a class ; that its officers come almost exclusively from one class, and that the bulk of the people neither have, nor can have, any share in the emoluments, the distinctions, and the glories which service in the Army confers upon those who attain to its highest ranks. It is absolutely untrue to say, as careless critics sometimes do, that the class from which our officers are chiefly drawn does not supply us with good officers. Making full allowance for all

possible failings, no country in the world has a better class of officers than our own, and no country has been better served than England has by those, many of them poor men, who have followed the career of arms with little reward save the honour and distinction which it has afforded. Nevertheless it would be better, beyond all question, if, in this instance too, we could level up, and bring the full current of national life, and not only one small branch of it, into the service of the Army. But emphatically the way to do this is not to ignore class distinctions, and the plan which is often advocated in Parliament and elsewhere, of giving commissions to men in the ranks, merely because they are in the ranks, is utterly wrong. A man who is serving in the ranks may have all the qualities of a good officer, but he does not possess them because he is serving in the ranks ; and everybody who knows anything whatever of the interior life of either the Navy or the Army, which, after all, is very much like the interior life of any other section of society, knows perfectly well that the mere transference of men from the non-commissioned to the commissioned ranks is like trying to mix oil with water, and often does far more harm than good. The proper method is to lay down the qualifications we require in an officer—the higher we put them the better—and to accept no man, whether duke or tinker, who does not possess them. But obviously that is only half

the battle. We must, as far as possible, give to all who desire to serve the country—as commissioned officers the chance of obtaining the necessary qualifications. If, therefore, we were to create an educational ladder by which boys of every class could be trained to the service of arms with the assistance of the State, much would have been accomplished, and the establishment of military training schools into which the holders of scholarships could pass would be invaluable to the Army. One other thing is required—namely, that the pay of the officer should be such as to enable him to live upon it. Such an increase must inevitably be made. When these things have been done there is no reason why the Army should remain a class organisation. But this can only be done with safety by levelling up, by refusing to abandon any of those qualities which we know to be necessary to an officer who is to lead men in the field, and by turning a deaf ear to those who would have us make the Army a mere subject for political experiments.

AN EXAMPLE FROM THE MAGISTRACY

Much the same may be said of the magistracy. It is true that the great trust of administering justice ought to be shared by all sections of the community. But that is no reason at all why men should be

made magistrates because they belong to a particular class. A magistrate ought to be selected because he is a man with some knowledge of the law, of high character, fair and impartial, and gifted with an alert and intelligent mind. A man ought no more to be made a magistrate because he is a trade-unionist, a politician, or a road mender, than because he is a duke, a brewer, or a professor of Sanscrit. If any member of one of these classes possesses all the qualifications which go to make a good magistrate, he should be made a magistrate. But the idea of 'rigging' the Bench with party or class representatives tends to degrade justice and to accentuate rather than to destroy class distinctions. It is no answer to say that many men have been appointed merely because they were wealthy, or because they have belonged to a particular class. If these men so appointed have not had the proper qualifications, it was a mistake to appoint them. But the error will not be improved by perpetuating and extending it.

Many more examples might be given in support of the view that the true way to eliminate class distinctions is not to ignore them, but to extend as far as possible the opportunities of the few to the many.

CONCLUSION

We have now concluded the all too brief chapters which we have devoted to constructive suggestions. Had space permitted they might have been greatly extended. But to whatever length produced, they could only be that which they purport to be—the contribution of an individual towards the solution of a great problem. That problem will never be wholly solved. Great changes will never be made rapidly, and no changes, however great, will eradicate human misery or free us from human misfortune. But progress can be made and will be made if all men and women will combine in a common cause.

We have spoken of an alternative policy to that of the Socialists, but, in a sense, the expression is open to criticism, for it involves the proposition that Socialism ever can help us out of our difficulties. It has been our object to make it perfectly clear that Socialism can do nothing of the kind, and that it should be opposed on its merits because, however excellent the intentions of its supporters, it must inevitably aggravate the ill from which we suffer, must increase the poverty it is designed to remove, must intensify the class distinctions which it professes to obliterate, and instead of bringing peace must bring hatred, strife, and, possibly, open war. Change is to be desired not because the teaching of Socialism makes change

inevitable, but because the need for change always exists.

Change is to be desired because, as a society becomes more complicated, and as population grows, civilisation tends more and more to crush the individual. It is the individual for whom all laws should be made, and to whose happiness all our institutions should minister. It is to be desired, therefore, that the community should take thought for the individual. This is work in which all English men and women have a right to join, and it is perhaps the greatest condemnation of the Socialist teachers that they have dared to arrogate to themselves not only the sole capacity to solve our social problems, but the sole right to deal with them. In the whole history of our national politics it would be hard to find a more arrogant claim than that which stands in the forefront of Socialist literature ; the claim that millions of Englishmen should be excluded altogether, not merely from participation in the government of their own country, but from all recognition as persons who desire, or can contribute, to the improvement of the conditions of life of their fellow-countrymen.

In conclusion, we only ask that what has been here written should be judged fairly and dispassionately. We have set out the principal heads of Socialist teaching in the words of the Socialist teachers themselves ; it is for our readers to exercise

their judgment with regard to those teachings. If they believe in them, they will support the Socialists as men who are truly serving their country. If they do not believe in them, it is their duty to act accordingly, and to do all that in them lies to preserve their country from the dangers which threaten it.

APPENDIX

THE following letters and the comments upon them appeared in the 'Standard' of December 14 and 18, 1907. The letters are printed here because they furnish a valuable commentary upon the methods of controversy adopted by some of the representatives of the Socialist organisations, and because the official position of Mr. Francis Johnson gives a special importance to the statements which he is instructed to make on behalf of the organisation to which he belongs.

From the 'Standard' of December 14, 1907.

A SOCIALIST DENIAL

We have received the following letter, written on the official notepaper of the Independent Labour Party, and we give it in full, including its printed heading :—

INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY.

Organising Department.

Chairman, J. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P.

Treasurer, T. D. Benson. Secretary, Francis Johnson.

Telegrams, 'Ilper, London.' Telephone, 2262 Central. 23

Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London, E.C., December 12.

To the Editor of the 'Standard'

Sir,—My attention has been called to No. 3 of Mr. Arnold-Forster's articles on Socialism, wherein he quotes

from a pamphlet entitled 'The Class War,' which he says is a publication of the I.L.P. This statement is absolutely untrue, as no pamphlet bearing that title has been issued by this office. This matter would be of no importance had not your contributor, by means of quotations from it, tried to make the I.L.P. responsible for ideas of class hatred and class tyranny which neither we nor any other Socialist organisation hold.

I may say, in conclusion, that Mr. Forster's articles are filled with misstatements, misquotations, and twisted meanings. As a serious criticism of Socialism they have little or no value.

Yours sincerely,

FRANCIS JOHNSON.

It will be observed that the writer is the Secretary of the Independent Labour Party, or I.L.P., and therefore qualified to speak on its behalf. His statement is perfectly clear and definite. It is that Mr. Arnold-Forster's statement in our columns—that the pamphlet 'The Class War' is a publication of the I.L.P.—is

'ABSOLUTELY UNTRUE.'

In support of his letter he forwards us a copy of the pamphlet referred to. The title-page of this copy is as follows :—

'Third Edition. "The Class War," a lecture by James Leatham. One penny. Printed and published by the Author at the Clerkhill Press, Peterhead. London: The Twentieth Century Press (Limited).'

In a negative way this might seem to be evidence in support of Mr. Francis Johnson's contention. Unfortunately for him, however, a reference to the title-page of the

pamphlet from which Mr. Arnold-Forster quoted shows that it reads thus:—

‘Fourth Edition.’ One penny. “The Class War,” a lecture by James Leatham.’ (Then follows a quotation from Fawcett’s ‘Manual of Political Economy.’) ‘Peterhead: The Clerkhill Press. London: The Twentieth Century Press (Limited). I.L.P. Publication Department.’

To make certain that the pamphlet is still in circulation a copy was purchased yesterday. There was no difficulty in obtaining it. And, again, it was a copy of the ‘Fourth Edition.—I.L.P. Publication Department,’ as above. It is worth mentioning, moreover, as Mr. Francis Johnson professes to speak not only for the I.L.P. but for all other Socialist organisations, that the pamphlet was purchased at the central offices of the Social Democratic Federation. It appears in the list issued by that body of ‘Books on Socialism, or treating of various subjects from the Socialist standpoint.’ The I.L.P. and the S.D.F., it is understood, have their own little quarrels, but in the matter of official approval of ‘The Class War’ they are most beautifully harmonious. ‘Justice,’ a Socialist organ edited by Mr. H. Quelch, whose name occurs so frequently at the time of a general election, remarks: ‘We are always glad to see a pamphlet by our comrade J. Leatham, as it is sure to contain spirited writing and pointed argument.’ ‘Entirely admirable’ is the comment of the ‘Clarion,’ Mr. Blatchford’s organ, on another of Mr. Leatham’s works; and of still another, the ‘Labour Leader,’ Mr. Keir Hardie’s paper remarks that it is ‘written in excellent style and forcibly argued.’

It is thus clear that Mr. Leatham’s pointed and spirited works are perfectly well known to Socialists of all classes; that his writings in general are approved by Socialists of quite different types; that the particular

pamphlet under notice—‘The Class War,’ from which Mr. Arnold-Forster quoted—is officially approved by both the S.D.F. and I.L.P.; and that it bears upon its own face the statement that it emanates from the I.L.P. Publication Department.

Now what is to be said of Mr. Francis Johnson, ‘Secretary of the I.L.P.,’ who, apparently trusting to the ingenuousness of his opponents, calmly sends us the letter printed above? Unfortunately the only thing that can be said is that this method of controversy is characteristic of the party to which he belongs. How can Socialism be judged except by the utterances of its leaders? Yet, if a quotation from one of these leaders be made, there is immediately a great cry from the others of the unfairness of charging them with what someone else said. The device is an everyday one on Socialist platforms and in the Socialist Press. Now, however, we have a quotation taken direct from an authorised publication of the I.L.P. themselves. And the reply, written authoritatively and officially by the Secretary of that body, is—what? In the first place, a flat denial of the facts. In the second place, an attempt to bolster up his denial by the production of an out-of-date copy of the pamphlet. Are these the morals of Socialists?

It must not be overlooked that the ‘Third Edition,’ which Mr. Francis Johnson produces, is one of the most damning pieces of evidence against him. (Unless, indeed, on the Socialist principle of the inversion of things, it is going to be contended that the ‘Fourth Edition’ naturally comes before the ‘Third Edition.’) The fact that the earlier edition was published solely by the author and the Twentieth Century Press, and that the later edition bears the name of the I.L.P. in addition, is convincing evidence that, although the initial responsibility for the pamphlet

was not apparently the I.L.P.'s, after the issue of the Third Edition they voluntarily and deliberately assumed that responsibility. If they are now prepared and desirous to repudiate Comrade Leatham, well and good; it is a matter which they may settle with the Peterhead author. But while their name is upon his pamphlet they must bear the responsibility for it. And in the meantime we leave Mr. Francis Johnson to meditate on the fate which befalls a controversialist who attempts to play the game of Socialist 'bluff' in such an inefficient manner as he has done.

From the 'Standard' of December 16, 1907.

ANOTHER STATEMENT FROM THE I.L.P.

We have received another letter from the Secretary of the I.L.P., which we print below:—

To the Editor of the 'Standard'

Sir,—In reply to your remarks in Saturday's issue of the 'Standard,' I beg to repeat that it is absolutely untrue that the pamphlet entitled 'The Class War' is an official Independent Labour Party publication. I have not seen a copy of the new edition which you say is now on sale. If our name is on it, it is there entirely without our permission, and we shall take up the matter with the author.

Mr. Arnold-Forster's object in taking sentences from this pamphlet and isolating them from their context, a method which is generally most unfair and misleading, is quite plain. He would have your readers believe that the Independent Labour Party, in its publications as well as from its platforms, endeavours to foster and develop a hatred between the working class and the employing classes, which it hopes may soon become strong enough

to infuriate the former into making a bloody attack upon the latter for the possession of the capital and the implements of production.

I warn your readers that this is untrue. If they take this view they will be misled, and the first time they hear an Independent Labour Party speaker deal with the subject, or they speak to an Independent Labour Party member, they will find out that the 'Standard' has been guilty of misrepresentation.

If Mr. Arnold-Forster desired to have such Independent Labour Party publications as would place him in possession of the general teachings of the Independent Labour Party, why did he not make application to me as the Secretary of the organisation? I should have only been too pleased to have helped him with such publications. Any *bona fide* inquirer into Independent Labour Party views would have done this.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

FRANCIS JOHNSON.

On comparison of the foregoing letter with the communication from the same writer which we printed last Saturday, two remarkable omissions will be noticed. In the first letter Mr. Johnson made the sweeping declaration that 'neither we nor any other Socialist organisation hold' the ideas of class hatred and class tyranny to be found in the pamphlet 'The Class War.' The evidence which we produced as to the pamphlet on Saturday on this point was incontrovertible. On this point Mr. Johnson now says nothing.

Secondly, Mr. Johnson's charge was one of bad faith against Mr. Arnold-Forster. His words were: 'He quotes from a pamphlet entitled "The Class War," which he says is a publication of the I.L.P. This statement is absolutely

untrue.' We showed that Mr. Arnold-Forster's quotations were from a pamphlet bearing as its publishers' imprint upon its face the names : 'Peterhead : The Clerkhill Press ; London : The Twentieth Century Press (Limited), I.L.P. Publication Department.' This evidence surely demanded a withdrawal of the charge of bad faith. On this point also Mr. Johnson now says nothing.

As to his present letter, apart from the comment on Mr. Arnold-Forster, which is a mere red herring drawn across the track, Mr. Johnson's position is this : He declares that he has 'not seen a copy of the new edition which you (the 'Standard') say is now on sale,' and that 'if our (Independent Labour Party) name is on it, it is there entirely without our permission.' The graceful doubts contained in his 'which you say' and 'if it is there' can be settled by anyone who cares to ask for a copy of 'The Class War' at the office of the Social Democratic Federation, 21A Maiden Lane, Charing Cross. The pamphlet 'The Class War,' is on the list of publications of that body issued in October of this year (and, for all that we know, may have appeared on earlier lists). That Mr. Johnson should be unaware that this important Socialist organisation has been circulating the pamphlet, and including it in its list of 'Books on Socialism, or Treating of Various Subjects from the Socialist Standpoint,' for at least three months, and that he should have been unaware that the pamphlet has been in circulation with the name of the Independent Labour Party prominently upon it, leave us to marvel at the manner in which the Independent Labour Party conducts its operations. But other people who have not the advantage of his imperfect knowledge can scarcely be blamed for taking the pamphlet for what it professes with all this degree of publicity to be—an official publication of the Independent Labour Party.

We shall, however, watch with interest the development of Mr. Johnson's undertaking to 'take up the matter with the author.'

On December 28 Mr. James Leatham sent a long communication to the 'Standard,' of which the greater part has no relevance to the point at issue. In the course of his letter, however, he makes the following statements :

- (1) Mr. Leatham is himself a member of the I.L.P.
- (2) The I.L.P. bought 2,000 copies of Mr. Leatham's pamphlets, including copies of 'The Class War.'
- (3) The I.L.P. is a distributor of 'The Class War.'
- (4) 'The I.L.P.' (according to Mr. Leatham) 'is the only Socialist party in Europe which does not accept, but explicitly repudiates, the principle of 'The Class War.'

INDEX

- AFFORESTATION**, 203
 Anabaptist movement, the, 126-128, 132, 134-136
Anabaptists, The Rise and Fall of the, 128
 Army, the British, 18—Its proposed abolition, 34, 72-80; not a Socialistic organisation, 174; its class distinctions, 212; *History of the British Army*, 148, 149
 — the Jacobin, 147-151
 Arnold, Matthew, 212
 Asquith, Mr.—on State control, 56
 Australia—its debt, 89; State railways, 178-180; land transfer, 201

BABCEUF conspiracy, 130
 Barons—as a ruling class, 103
 Barrow-in-Furness, 110
 Bax, Mr. Belfort, 127-131, 153
 Beaumont and Fletcher, 105
 Becket, Thomas à, 103
 Belgium—State railways, 177
 'Benevolences,' 89
 Blatchford, Mr., 221
 Bonaparte, Napoleon, 150, 152, 205
 Bowley, Mr., 8
 Bradlaugh, Mr., 32, 101

CANADA, 80, 81
 Capitalists, 5, 7, 28
 Carnot, 150
 Carrier, 143
Catechism for Socialist Children, Red, 60, 68
 Chamberlain, Mr., 184
 Chartist movement, 130
 Chester, Bishop of—Dr. Jayne, 184
 Children—proposed abolition of child labour, 36, 98-101; their treatment, 47; State maintenance of school children, 172, 173; *Red Catechism for Socialist Children*, 60, 68
 Christian Communism, 127. *See also* Anabaptist Movement
 Christianity and Socialism, 44-47
 Church, the—as a ruling class, 103
 Citizen Army, 73, 74
 Civil Service, 178
Clarion, 221
 Class distinctions, 4-9, 210-215
 — taxation, 114
 — War, 4, 6, 24-28, 101-104, 142-144
Class War, The, x-xii, 25, 220-226
 Clemenceaux, M., 180
 Collective administration, 29-33, 174
 Collectivism, Democratic, 31
 Commons, House of, 42, 57, 70, 76, 77, 95
 Communards, the, 51, 132
 Commune, a British, 94

- Commune, A Short History of the Paris*, Bax, 130, 131, 153
Commune de Paris, La, de Vassy-Beaumont, 160, 161
Commune, History of the, Lissagaray, 158
 Commune of Paris of 1793, 129, 130, 137-152
 — — of 1871, 49, 51, 79, 126, 130, 131, 153-162
 Communications, improvements of, 202
 Communism, Christian, 127. *See also* Anabaptist Movement.
 Compensation, 118
 Competition, 182, 183, 185
 Connell, S., 62
 Consols, *see* National Debt
 Co-operation, 174
 Couthon, 143
 Criticism—abusive, x, xii; elusive, v
 Crown, the—as a ruling class, 103
 Curzon, Lord, 191
- DANGER of Socialism, the real, 51
 Danton, 139
 de Lamballe, Princesse, 140
 Debt, National, *see* National Debt
 Democratic Collectivism, 31
 Democratic State, 55; such States are warlike, 75; great borrowers, 89; they become oligarchies, 133; the government of the Jacobins, 137
 Distribution, Socialisation of the means of, 55; co-operative, 174
 Division of Profit, *see* Profit
 — — Society, *see* Society
 Drink traffic, 184
 Dumouriez, 148
- EDUCATION, 66, 211
 Eight hours' day, 185
 Emigration, 192
- Empire and Murder*, 10
 Empire, the British—Socialist destruction, 34, 80-84; its unity and unification, 189-192
 Enclosure Acts, 200
 Equal division of profit, 66, 67
 Equality before the law, 64
 — of opportunity, 62, 66
 Exchange, Socialisation of the means of, 55
 Exports to India, 83
 Expropriation involved in Socialism, 28
- FABIAN Society, vii, ix, 3, 8, 20, 105, 118
 Facts, figures, and fancies, 3
Facts for Socialists, 3, 8
 Family—Socialist destruction of ties, 21, 45, 47; community of wives under Anabaptism, 135
 Forestry, 203
 Fortescue, 148, 149
 Fourier, 15
 France—the Republic, 59; Citizen Army, 74; war of 1870, 79; French Socialists, 123; Revolution, 126, 128-130, 137-152, 182; State railways, 178; State servants, 180. *See also* Commune of Paris
 Franchise to Civil Servants, 179, 180
 Frankfort, 210
 Free imports, 195
French Revolution, the, Bax, 128-130, 138-147
 Fréron, 143
- GERMANY—taxation, 120; German Socialists, 123 (*see also* Marx); State railways, 177, 178; land transfer in Hamburg, 201; system of forestry, 204; the attractiveness of Frankfort as a city, 210
 Ghengis Khan, 125

Giffen, Sir Robert, 8
 Gill, Mr., 100
 Girondists, 140-142, 145
 Gospel of War and of Hate, 24, 25, 28
 Gothenburg system, 185
 Government, democratic, *see* Democratic State
 Government without consent of the governed, 10
 Grayson, Mr., 55, 61-74

HAMBURG—its system of land transfer, 201

Hardie, Mr. Keir, 45, 55, 61, 74, 80, 81, 84, 101-103, 221
 Hazell, A. P., 60
 Headlam, Rev. Stewart, 208
 Hostages, law of, 158
 Housing problem—municipal dwellings, 183, 184
 Hyndman, Mr., 24, 32, 44, 51, 55, 61, 74, 84, 101, 140

I.L.P., vi, ix, 25, 27, 70, 218-226

Ideals, National, 189-192
 Imperialism, 194. *See also* Empire, the British

Imports, free, 195
 — from India, 83

Incomes—taxation to extinction, 34, 36, 69; over 300*l.*, 36, 69; earned and unearned, 70. *See also* Wages

Independent Labour Party, *see* I.L.P.

India—its suggested abandonment, 34, 80-84; British trade 83; State railways, 177

Individuality, 170, 191, 217

Industry, *see* Trade

Inquisition, Holy, 26, 102

Insurance, State, 164, 169-171, 194

Italy—railway servants, 180

JACOBINS, the, 51, 126, 129, 130, 132, 137-144, 146-149

Jayne, Dr., Bishop of Chester, 184

John, King, 103

John of Leyden, 135, 136

Johnson, Mr. Francis, Secretary of I.L.P., vi, x, xi, 219-226

Judges, election of, 36, 95-97

Justice, 221

KOUTSKY, KARL, 118, 119

LA VENDÉE, 149

Labour, child, *see* Children

— Party, *see* I.L.P.

— profits of, 174

Labour Leader, 221

Lamballe, Princesse de, 140

Lancashire cotton industry, 99, 100, 112

Land question, 196-202

Lassalle, 15

Leatham, James, xii, 25, 220-226

Lebon, 143

Lecomte, General, 156

Levelling-up *v.* levelling-down, 12, 190-192

Leyden, John of, 135, 136

Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, 132, 133, 137-142, 160

Lifeboat service, 50

Lincoln, Abraham, 9

Lissagaray, 158

London, 173; street improvements, 209

— County Council, 31, 50, 58, 184

Long Parliament, 103

Lords, House of, 57

MACDONALD, J. RAMSAY, M.P., vii-ix, 219

Machinery—ownership of a sewing machine, 68

- Magistracy—principle of selection, 214
 Manchester School of economists, 169
 Marat, 141, 142
 Marine, mercantile, 205
 Marx, Karl, 15, 32, 33
 Maximum wage, *see* Wages
 Mercantile marine, 205
 Milk walk in London, 50
 Minimum wage, *see* Wages
 'Minorities must suffer,' 9
 Monarchy, the abolition of the, 35, 57
 Money, L. G. Chiozza, M.P., 8
 Mountain, the party of the, 130
 Mulhall, Mr., 8
 Municipal debt, 91
 — dwellings, 183, 184
 — enterprise, 19, 183, 184
Municipal Puritanism, 208
- NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, 150, 152, 205
 National Debt—its constitution, 86; its proposed repudiation, 35, 85-93; result of repudiation, 87
 National Guard, French, 156, 160
 Navy, the British, 18—Its proposed abolition, 72-80; not a Socialistic organisation, 174
 Navy of the Jacobins, 151
 Netherlands, 80
 New Zealand—State railways, 178
 Norman, C. H., 10
- OLD-AGE pensions, 164, 169-171, 194
On the Morrow of the Social Revolution, 119
 Opportunity, equality of, 62-66
- PARIS—Commune of 1793, 129, 130, 137-152; Commune of 1871, 49, 51, 79, 126, 130, 131, 153-162; maintenance of children, 173. *See also* Commune
 Parliament, 57, 60, 70, 103, 166, 179, 188, 197, 213; reform of political machinery, 168. *See also* Commons, House of
 — Long, 103
 — Rump, 103
 Patricians, Roman, 102
 Peace, Charles, 48
 Pensions, old-age, 164, 169-171, 194
 Philosophers, Socialism of the, 15-17
 Pollock, Sir Frederick, 97
 Poor, the, 4, 5, 170, 171, 207
 Poplar Guardians, 58
 Post Office, the, 18—not a Socialistic organisation, 174; its relation with the franchise, 179
 Power distribution, 202
 Press, liberty of the, 157
 Private enterprise, 29-33, 184, 203. *See also* Collective Administration, Competition, and Co-operation
 Production, Socialisation of the means of, 55, 68, 69, 128
 Profit—public appropriation of industrial profits, 31; equal division, 66, 67; profits of labour, 174
 Programme of the I.L.P., *quoted*, 34, 69
 — S.D.F., *quoted*, 34-36, 55, 69, 94, 95, 98; *referred to*, 77, 164
 Proletariat, 5, 7, 130; Schäffle's definition, 7; Marat the first great vindicator of its rights, 142
 'Property is robbery,' 70
 Property, private, 29
 Prudhomme, 70
 Public-houses, 50

Publications quoted or referred to
(indexed under separate headings)—

- Anabaptists, The Rise and Fall of the*
Army, History of the British
Catechism for Socialist Children, Red. S.D.F.
Class War, The. I.L.P.; S.D.F.
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Social Revolution, On the Morrow of. S.D.F.
Socialism and the Budget. I.L.P.
Socialism and the Survival of the Fittest. S.D.F.
Socialism, benefit the English People? Will. S.D.F.
Socialism, The Quintessence of What use is a Vote? S.D.F.
Puritanism, 208

QUELCH, H., 35, 80, 221
Quintessence of Socialism, The,
32

RAILWAYS, nationalisation of,
48, 176-182
Reason, goddess of, 146, 147
Red Catechism for Socialist Children, 60, 68
Referendum, 164, 169
Reign of Terror, 149
Religion—The Reign of 'Reason,'
146, 147. See also Christianity

Representation, proportional, 50,
164, 168
Republics—French, 59; Roman,
102; United States, 59
Revolution, 51; French, 59
Roads and roadmaking, 204
Robespierre, 141, 146
Roman Republic, 102
Rossel, 157
Rump Parliament, 103
Ruskin, 168
Russell-Smart, H., 70

S.D.F., vi, ix, xi, xii, 27, 28, 30,
33, 34, 35, 55, 94, 104, 118,
137, 144, 147, 151, 162, 221,
222. For its Programme and
Publications, see these headings

St. Simon, 15
Savings invested in Consols, 92
Schäffle, Dr., 7, 31, 33
Scotland, 173
Shackleton, Mr., 100
Shaw, G. Bernard, 55, 61, 117-
119
Smart, H. Russell-, 70
Smirke, Sir Sydney, 209
Social Democracy and the Armed Nation, 35, 80
Social-Democratic Federation, see
S.D.F.
Social-Democratic Federation; its Objects, its Principles, and its Work, The, xii
Social Revolution, On the Morrow of, 119
Socialism—
active, 17
antecedents, its historical, 123-
162
basis, its real, 1-13
Christianity, correspondence
with, 44-46
danger, its, 51
definition, its, 14-21
everyday, 18-20, 163-186
fight, we must, 39-44
kinds, three, 14-21

- Socialism (*cont.*)—
 municipal, 19
 philosophical, 15-17
 programme, its, 22-28
 promises examined, its, 53-104
 reforms, its urgent, 22-28
 taxation, 105-122
 teaching, its, 11, 22-38
 tyranny, a, 44
Socialism and the Budget, 70
Socialism and the Survival of the Fittest, 62
Socialism, The Quintessence of, 32
Socialist Children, Red Catechism for, 60, 68
 Society, Socialist division of, 6-9, 210-215
 'Spoils system, the,' 59
Standard, v, 219-226
 'State, the'—what it means, State control and interference, 55-61; insurance, 164, 169-171; maintenance of children in schools, 172, 173
Statistical Society's Journal, 8
- TARIFF Reform, 195
 Taxation—of incomes to extinction, 34, 69-72, 117-122; of unearned incomes, 69-72; criterion of just taxation, 107-113; class taxation, 114; punitive, 115-118; self-destructive, 120-122; on land, 201
 Terror, Reign of, 149
 Thomas, General Clément, 156
 Thrift, 170, 171, 191
Times, 56, 96, 97
 Torquenada, 102
 Torrens Act, 201
- Trade—with India, 83; industries dependent on child labour, 99; cotton and woollen trades, 99, 100, 112. *See also* Private Enterprise
 Trade Unions, 182
 Turreau, 149
- UNEARNED income, 69-72
 United States, 59, 79; judicial system, 96, 97
- VASSY-BEAUMONT, 160, 161
 Vendée, La, 149
 Vickers and Maxim, Messrs, 110
 Victoria, 179
- WAGES—wage-earners, 7; estimates of wage-earning families, 8; provision of maximum and minimum wage, 35, 67, 182; wages and tariff reform, 194
 Walney Island, 110
 War, abolition of, 73-77. *See also* Class War
 Warwick, Earl of, 103
 West Ham Guardians, 58-60
What use is a Vote? 26, 30
Wife for a Month, A, 105
Will Socialism benefit the English People? 24, 33, 101
 Woolwich Town Council, 59, 60
 Working classes—their savings part of the National Debt, 92
- YORKSHIRE woollen industry, 99, 112

SOME PRESS OPINIONS.

DAILY TELEGRAPH.—‘Here is a book with a great heart and a great purpose ; a book which deserves, and which we expect to see attain, the very widest circulation. It is a book which political organisations might very well arrange to disseminate broadcast, for wherever it is read it is bound to have a fruitful influence. Mr. Arnold-Forster indulges in no flowers of rhetoric ; he is content to confront statement with fact, and hyperbole with sound deduction. The book is a short one, but it succeeds in demolishing its adversary with fresh prepossessing vigour. We would like to see a copy of this volume upon the table of every working-men’s club in the country. Its perusal would soon put a stop to a good deal of foolish but dangerous post-prandial rhodomontade.’

STANDARD.—‘A contribution of inestimable value to the literature of a burning question, and should be within the reach of all who desire to study it seriously. We cannot too strongly recommend the perusal of this book to men and women of all classes of society and all shades of political opinion. It is absolutely free from partisan spirit, eminently fair in its criticism, and admirably clear in its reasoning ; it will confound many, but it can offend none. It will inform those to whom Socialism is an incomprehensible mystery or an absolutely unknown creed, and we hope that it will open the eyes of many to whom Socialism, taught in an attractive form, has appealed, and show them the errors of their new belief.’

WORLD.—‘For unthinking persons who have been glamourised by the Socialist mirage, we could wish for no better “eye-opener” than Mr. Arnold-Forster’s plain, matter-of-fact, and crushing exposure of the mischievous fallacies and predatory aims of present-day Socialism, and the disaster and ruin that would inevitably follow any attempt to put its theories into practice.’

OUTLOOK.—‘The case against Socialism is tersely stated and overwhelmingly established in this volume. . . . If any doubt exists as to the duty of all fair-minded and honest citizens to combat Socialism, it will be removed on reading this powerful exposure of its insidious aims and its dangers to all classes of the community.’

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